

Calvinist Contact

A Reformed Weekly

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Columbus Day is not something to celebrate, say North American Indians

Alison de Groot

LONDON, Ont. — Next year will mark the 500th anniversary of Christopher Columbus' "discovery" of America but Native peoples say they will do everything they can to disrupt celebrations all over the continent.

"We're going to use any means necessary to stop the celebrations...and we're going to do it on every continent in the Western hemisphere — North America, Central America and South America," Russell Means, a U.S. Indian activist told the Indigenous Peoples Conference at the University of Western Ontario in London, Ont., earlier this month.

At the same time, at a meeting in Camrose, Alta., the Aboriginal Rights Coalition told the Canadian Council of Churches that the anniversary of Columbus' arrival in America should be marked by repentance rather than celebration by Canadian churches.

The coalition, which is funded by 10 church groups, presented a resolution to

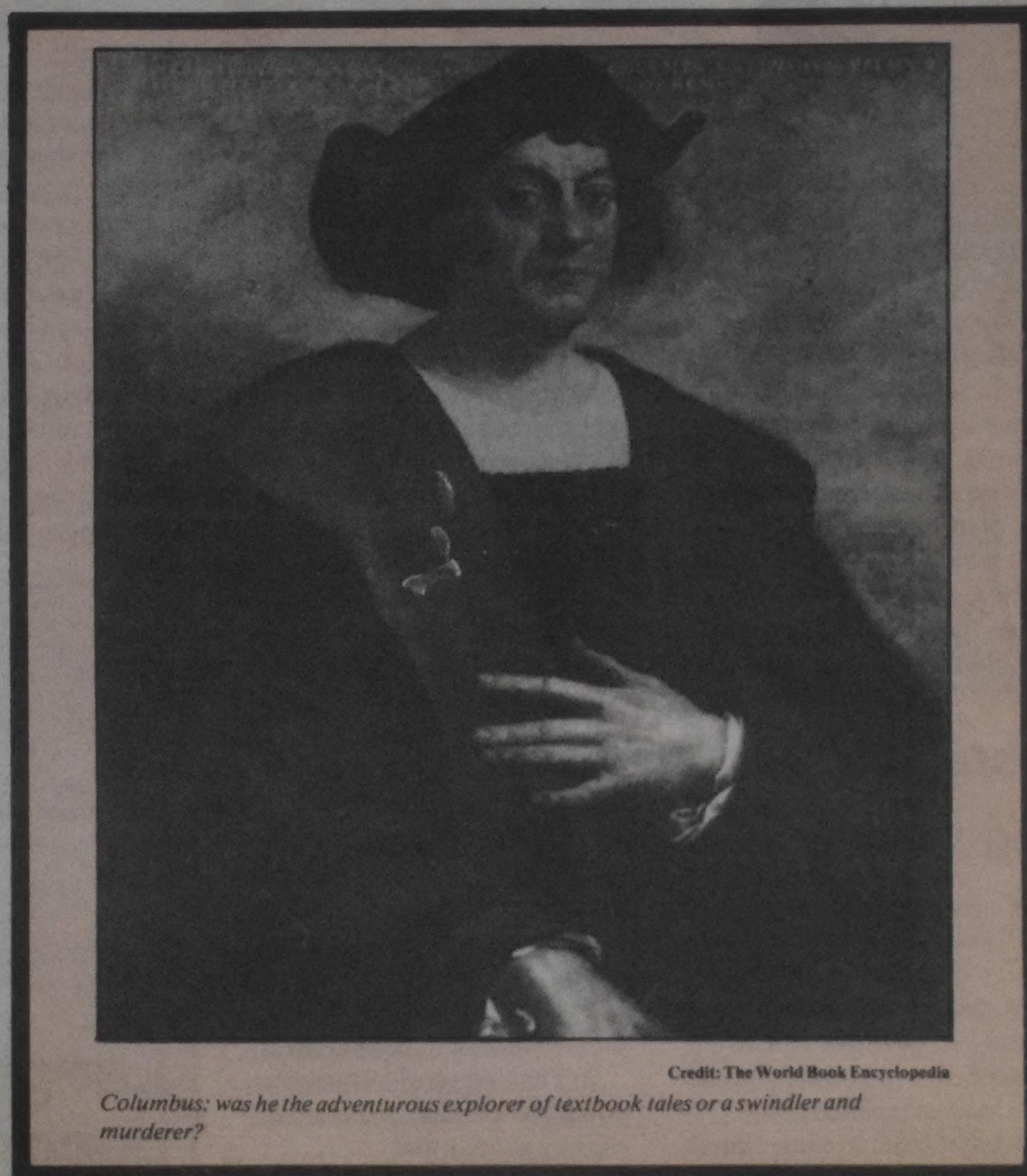
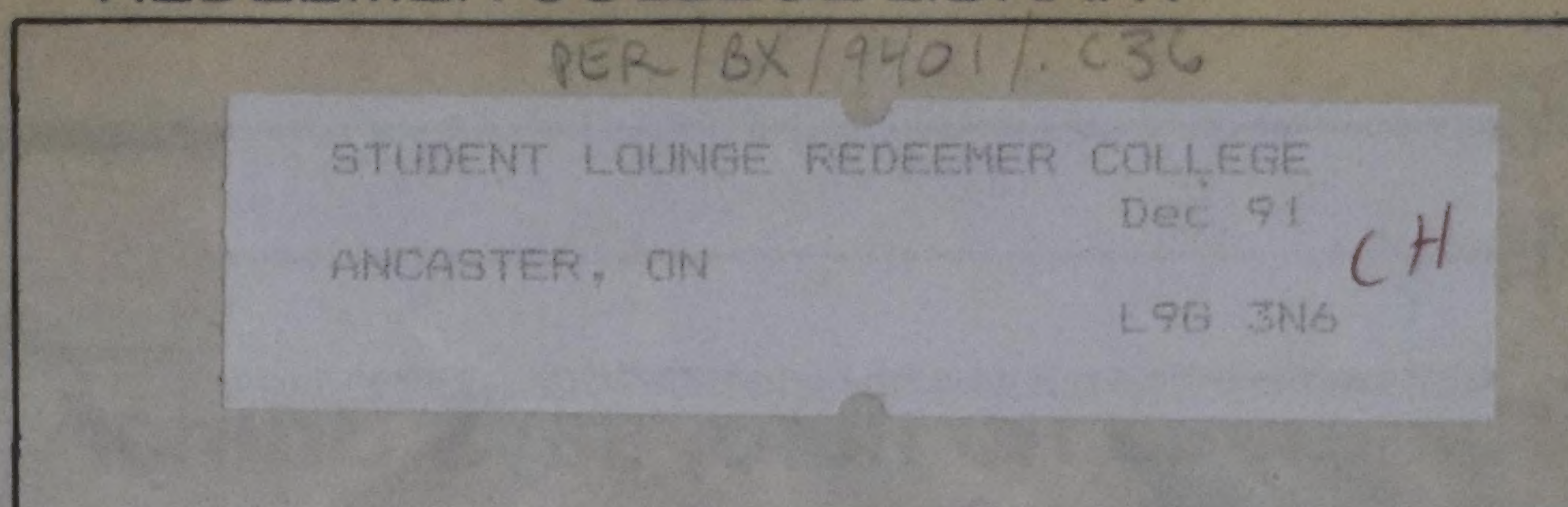
the 17-member Council of Churches, calling on the council to mark the 500th anniversary of Columbus' arrival in 1992 with "reflection and repentance."

Native groups are arguing that there is no reason to celebrate the arrival of Columbus and those who came after him from many European countries because their arrival had a devastating effect on America's original inhabitants. The dispossession of land, loss of language, culture, religion and self-determination, and the drastic reduction of population due to illness are among the effects of European colonization, says the Aboriginal Rights Coalition.

Many people would agree with the argument that Columbus was no hero.

Avaricious, racist tyrant

"There will be celebrations galore commemorating Columbus the brave and visionary adventurer," writes Lawrence Bruner, a Toronto editor and freelance writer, in a recent *Toronto*



Credit: The World Book Encyclopedia

Columbus: was he the adventurous explorer of textbook tales or a swindler and murderer?

Star feature. "We'll hear little about Columbus the swindler, avaricious murderer and racist tyrant."

Columbus began his career as a pirate in 1472, writes Bruner. In 1492 he got permission from the king and queen of Spain to seek a westward route to the

Orient but he wouldn't go until they made him a knight, viceroy and grand admiral.

Two months after leaving Spain, Columbus and his crew landed on San Salvador in the West Indies and immediately

See COLUMBUS—p. 2

Research shows television news shapes attitudes

Robert VanderVennen

VANCOUVER, B.C. — We get not only information from TV news broadcasts but also attitudes towards news, according to a recent study. This powerful tool by which television shapes opinions is called *priming*.

Priming has now been studied from Canadian news broadcasts on national CBC and CTV news by Lydia Miljan, using the resource bank of the National Media Archive which contains transcripts of all news broadcasts on those networks.

News anchors make summary statements, and reporters on the scene give local colour and often give us a sentence or two from persons involved. Miljan has identified statements as to whether they are interpretive or factual, and whether they inform, present causes, or offer solutions or effects.

Reporter and anchor statements make up half of all statements on network news, says Miljan.

Paraphrasing of comments is often used, somewhat more often by CTV than CBC. Paraphrasing is often used to introduce a person's viewpoint, often followed by a direct quote.

Not naming sources is often practised when reporting on meetings held behind closed doors. John Turner, former leader of the Liberal Party, has been a severe critic of this practice, out of concern that such reporting easily descends to gossip mongering.

News sources

One-fourth of source statements originated with government officials, the study found. Special interest groups

ranked second to government sources, over opposition members of parliament. Academics received only five per cent of the attention as sources, about the same as on-the-street interviews.

In reporting on the GST, economists were interviewed less than two per cent of the time. As with Meech Lake reporting, government officials were the largest source.

When experts were interviewed, as opposed to government officials or

special interest groups, the nature of the coverage differed, says Miljan. In reporting on the deficit, economists comprised 14 per cent of interviewee statements. Solutions to the problem comprised over a third of both networks' attention, giving substantive coverage to the issue.

An example of priming is Alan Fryer's CTV report on the deficit by saying, "The government says it wants to amend unemployment insurance. The NDP says that's code for 'cutbacks.'" Then follows a shot of NDP leader Ed Broadbent saying, "Anyone that was getting unemployment insurance now should be at least apprehensive about a possible reduction in his or her benefits and, depending on the category, perhaps even elimination."

Sources used in newscasts have a powerful impact on the information presented, says Miljan. She quotes John Soloski: "How reporters gather news and the types of sources they use are important to study because they determine not only what information is presented to the public, but what image of society is presented."



CTV news anchor Terrilyn Joe

Photo: Brian Miller

Thinkbit:

Gus Pagonis, Desert Storm's logistics general, held 30-minute meetings for his top 40 officers every morning. They never went past that. He kept everybody standing to keep them from digressing.

From a report in *Business Week*

In this issue:

Alaska: a great place to visit pp. 10, 11
The Soviet Union is a spiritual Chernobyl p. 12
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United Churches cause growth of RCA p. 14

News

Columbus no hero, says Bruner

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diately made plans to enslave the inhabitants, forcibly removing seven from the island. Columbus would later claim prize money for being first to spot the island, although one of his sailors was the rightful claimant.

Of the natives on the island of Hispaniola, Columbus would write that they were "good to be ordered and made to work, sow and do all that is necessary to adopt our ways."

Columbus had several crewmen hanged for minor offenses and forced his men to swear that Cuba was part of the mainland. Breaking this oath

meant having their tongues cut out. His crew reportedly mutinied four times.

Columbus was eventually brought back to Spain in chains after he and his brothers had been running the colonies like despots, holding back salaries and conducting an orgy of arrests and hangings.

"Columbus went to his deathbed pleading with the king to make him sole owner of all lands in the new world," writers Bruner.

Ugly questions

Bruner comments that the worst part of the Columbus story is that in textbooks

Columbus is portrayed in a heroic light.

"Columbus could just as easily be compared to Atilla the Hun, but then what would our schoolchildren think? If the textbooks exposed Columbus for what he was, it would raise some ugly questions about our country, our continent and our civilization. All Canadians are indebted to Columbus for our land, resources and prosperity. If we admit the hero was a monster then we might start doubting our right to be here,"

Bruner muses.

"Five hundred years and we're not putting up with it," Means told delegates on the final day of the London conference. "You don't see the English celebrating the Viking invasions or even the Norman invasions. You don't see the Spanish celebrating the Inquisition, or the Arabs celebrating the Crusades."

In Alberta, Lorna Schwartzentruber, a Mennonite member of the Aboriginal Rights Coalition said she hoped the

Council of Churches would adopt their proposed resolution calling for a day of repentance instead of celebration on Columbus' anniversary. Schwarzentuber says that would send a message of solidarity to Canada's Native people.

She said that despite past sins, Christian churches were one of the first to get on board in terms of solidarity with Canada's Native people. *With files from the Toronto Star.*

Canadian church leaders seek legislation against pornography

C.C. staff

BURLINGTON — Representatives of a broad range of Canadian church groups have urged Justice Minister Kim Campbell to introduce legislation against pornography.

A letter from 9 senior church staff persons said that two types of pornography "should be categorically and firmly prohibited" by law.

"We are agreed," their letter said, "that the production, distribution, and exhibition of pornography 1) involving children and 2) depicting violent or degrading behaviour in a sexual context should be offences under the Criminal Code."

In the last Parliament, Bill C-54 on pornography died on the order paper.

Signing the letter were: Rev. James Weisgerber, Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops; Ven. David Woeller, The Anglican Church of Canada; Rev. Dr. Howard Mills, The United Church of Canada; Dr. L.E. (Ted) Siverns, The Presbyterian Church of Canada; Colonel Arthur E. Waters, The Salvation Army; Rev. Brian Stiller, Evangelical Fellowship of Canada; Mr. Larry Kehler, Mennonite Central Committee; Ms. Vivian Harrower, Women's Inter-Church Council of Canada; Rev. Arie G. Van Eek, Council of Christian Reformed Churches in Canada.

Their agreement on the need to ban pornography involving children and depicting violence or degrading behaviour was based on 10 principles, the

church representatives said.

Ten principles

1) That all human beings are created in the image of God.

2) That men and women are equal and entitled to the same dignity and respect.

3) That children, who are most vulnerable and innocent, must be protected from sexual exploitation and perversion.

4) That even though the research is still incomplete, there are links between the use of pornography and violence against women and children.

5) That pornography, with its images of male domination and female subordination, is a barrier to the equality of women.

6) That sexuality is a gift from God and sexual expression is to be enjoyed in loving, consensual, committed relationships.

7) That pornography depersonalizes what is most personal and publicizes what should be most private.

8) That pornography alienates and dehumanizes the participants, sellers and buyers.

9) That pornography, with its focus on the physical, fragments the totality and degrades the beauty, tenderness, and intimacy of sexual relationships.

10) That pornography impedes the development of healthy sexual and other interpersonal relationships.

The Justice Minister was urged to act soon to introduce legislation reflecting the principles set out in the letter.



David T. Koyzis

Language-based nationalism has become a religion

In many countries quarrels over language rights have become as heated and divisive as the struggles over religion were for earlier generations. In the wake of secularization, language is often expected to provide the spiritual foundations for communal identity once furnished by the more traditional faiths. In short, linguistic-based nationalisms have become surrogate religions.

Until a generation ago Belgium was divided along religious and ideological lines into *trois familles spirituelles*, name, the Roman Catholic, liberal and socialist "families." The divisions separating these groups were the salient ones in that country, much as the neighbouring Netherlands was also divided into confessionally-based sub-cultures. In those days the chief political issue for Belgians was how to bring about some sort of satisfactory accommodation among the three groupings. Now, however, the old spiritual boundaries have broken down and the country is currently divided between the French-speaking Walloons and the Flemish-speaking Flemings. Few Belgians argue about religion any more; but language is a highly contentious issue, and separate group identities have been built around it.

Not only in Canada

Canadians are no strangers to the problems of linguistic duality, and after some two centuries the French-English conflict is threatening to tear us apart. We are not alone, however, since most countries face similar dilemmas. Even in the United States, where English supposedly reigns supreme, increasing numbers of unassimilable Latin Americans are giving the Spanish language a certain quasi-official status, especially in such cities as Miami and Los Angeles.

At their most virulent, conflicting nationalisms may be immune to political solution. In such cases the idolatrous character of these ideologies becomes evident. But some countries have come up with creative political ways of easing, if not solving, linguistic cleavages. In this country Pierre Trudeau's government pursued a policy of official bilingualism from sea to sea. By contrast Belgium has followed an approach based on separate

unilingual territories in Flanders and Wallonia. Canada seems now to be moving in a Belgian direction, for better or worse.

Many Third World countries have kept the language of the former colonial power as the official language of government and business. Accordingly, Nigeria uses English, while the Cote d'Ivoire uses French. This attachment to the language of past "oppressors" might initially seem curious considering that many of these countries have pursued anti-Western policies since independence. But from another angle it's not really so strange.

Maybe we should all learn Cree

Consider India. Over 1,600 languages and dialects are spoken in that subcontinental nation which belonged to Britain before 1947. Hindi is the dominant local language, but giving it privileged status might suggest that India is really a multinational empire ruled by native Hindi-speakers. The advantage of English is that everyone from every linguistic group is equally inconvenienced by having to learn it. For this reason it's the perfect *lingua franca* for a multi-ethnic federation!

Europe has barely begun to anticipate potential language problems in a united continent. Although the principal languages of the 12 member states all enjoy official status, in reality much of the European Community's business takes place in English and French, while German is gaining ground. I would suggest, only partly tongue-in-cheek, that Europeans might do well to follow the Indian example and make, say, Latin the official language of the community. And perhaps our own language problems would diminish if we were to adopt Cree or Micmac as our official language and make everyone learn it.

Of course, such "solutions" can only take us so far. If language does indeed function for many people as an alternative religious focus for group loyalty, then perhaps we Christians need to address the ensuing political difficulties by first exposing the spiritual roots of language-based nationalisms.

David T. Koyzis is assistant professor of political science at Redeemer College, Ancaster, Ont.

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Newfoundland had three centimeters of snow on Victoria weekend. No wonder Monsieur was off to the Far East, drumming up business and selling IVs. That's not some new intravenous feeding method; the acronym stands for Instant Immigrant Visas. You can buy them from the Canadian government for a truckload of money.

Meanwhile, back at the ranch, information commissioner John Grace let it be known that previous Finance Minister Michael Wilson often sabotaged the Access to Information Act, and Justice Minister Kim Campbell (one of the Tory's major power-brokers) delivered herself of the statement that Canada's laws are sexist.

Even worse news came out of Carleton University which annually comments on the policies of the federal government. This year's verdict was as follows: "Prime Minister Brian Mulroney's style and policies are pushing Canada towards breakup." Stuff like that could really spoil Monsieur's appetite just when he is having all these wonderful Eastern delicacies such as bird's nests and the like.

With the arrival of Mr. Clark at the unity front there seems to be a sort of embryonic revival of reconciliation. Premier Wells sounded downright friendly and Premier Bourassa will participate in the next federal/provincial conference on equalization payments, even though earlier he had solemnly declared that he would not attend any federal/provincial conferences anymore. Who knows?

The verbal violence that earlier dominated the political constitutional debate has certainly been toned down considerably. What helped, of course, is that we haven't heard from Mrs. Carstairs in a long time. The shocking happening in India, by the way, shows what the end result is of verbal violence. Blood!

The interest-rate tumble is bad news for many people's savings accounts, but it is good news for the government. With every percentage point downward the government saves almost two billion dollars, which isn't chopped liver when you come to think of it. There was also speculation that the government was cashing in on the GST to the tune of much-more-than-the-predicted \$16.3 billion. Revenue Minister Otto Jelinek answered that rumour by telling one and all that the government had not even had time yet to count the money that had come in.

It is better, for a while at least, not to get sick in Saskatchewan. They're exporting patients from that province because of the nurses' strike.

Have you ever been to a union meeting? It is moving to see and hear the members sing the doxology of socialist meetings: "Solidarity Forever." Feike Asma used to lead a socialist choir in heart-warming renditions of the Dutch equivalent. Well, forget it. There is no more solidarity in the labour movement than there is among Donald Trump's women. The International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers is trying to steal the Canadian Union of Postal Workers from Jean-Claude Parrot. It is a really dirty war with executives leaking the amounts of each other's salaries and income tax returns. Solidarity forever, ha! Life is full of bitter disappointments.

And what, I ask, is "pishing"? My faithful Oxford says that it is making a declaration of contempt. Not so, according to the CPC, where people say that it is making the *psh, psh, psh* sound to attract birds. I tend to hold with the Oxford.

I keep track of this women-in-office thing, as you know. I spotted another one. Pierette Lucas is Canada's Chief of Protocol. She is the woman who arranges the meetings and greetings of visiting heads of state and high-ranking diplomats who come calling in Ottawa.

Jimmy Swaggart was in Calgary. The Calgary Ministerial Association had asked him to stay away, but tear-jerking Jimmy decided Calgarians needed him and he came anyway. Attendance at his rallies was disappointing, to say the least. I think he is headed for the minor leagues: tent revivals! Other religious news comes from Stone Mountain, Georgia, where there is a roadside billboard advertising Pizza Hut. It shows a plate full of steaming spaghetti. People are seeing in the steam from the tomato sauce the likeness of a man with deep set eyes and a beard — and a crown of thorns. Visions in tomato sauce!

Yugoslavians are busy breaking up their country. A referendum in Croatia showed that 94 per cent of its citizens wanted independence. The country will fall apart into insignificant little units. The United States is already moving to block financial aid and loans because of Yugoslavia's internal turmoil.

Monsieur was not the only one hitting the travel circuit. Penitent Pole Lech Walesa was in Israel apologizing for his country's anti-Semitism. Mrs. Thatcher was in South Africa, not apologizing of course. She would not know an apology if it were served on a platter with cucumber sandwiches during "high tea." U.S. Vice-President Quayle was in Japan, trying to hustle a few billion-dollar deals peddling U.S. rice. Japan, which by now owns about three-quarters of the world's real estate, has 150 commercial banks; the United States, which owns more money than any other nation, has 12,000 of those establishments. Any connection? Maybe this is an American first too: students at schools in Chicago now have to enter through a metal detector. A whole arsenal of arms has already been confiscated.

Life unfolds before our eyes in the classified sections of the newspapers. An ad in the *Kansas City Star* reads: "For sale: Smith-miniature airplane, 85 horsepower; licensed aerobatic. Wife insists I sell it. Make offer for plane or make offer for wife."

The Soviet Union approved a law which made it possible for its citizens to travel abroad. The law does away with the need for exit visas. Oh, oh, were going to have a run on toilet paper from Russian tourists. Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev wants to buy more toilet paper and other assorted items for his fellow citizens. How about lending him \$100 billion? He asked the G-7 countries, which includes Canada. As if we had some old sock under Mila's mattress with some spare billions in it.

President Bush is doing a lot better, according to spokesperson Marlin Fitzwater. He can't jog yet and

Pressreview

Carl D. Tuyl



he's drinking decaf coffee. I hope somebody told him about the garlic ads in old *Calvinist Contact* issues. President Bush admonished Fidel Castro (we haven't seen *him* for a long time) to get on the democracy bandwagon. Does Fidel still smoke cigars? President Bush is trying to restore MFN status to China. MFN does not mean more funds needed; it stands for "most favoured nation." American lawmakers are not yet quite in tune with the president's efforts. They say that Bush, who used to be America's ambassador to China, has a diplomatic blind spot when it comes to relations with that country.

Melda Marcos, the Philippine shoe lady, agreed to pay \$2 million to settle a \$15.1 million judgment for the murder of two anti-Marcos union leaders.

Airlines all over the world are chopping down their prices like they were firewood at a campsite. It hardly pays to stay at home, which is, however, where I will stay as much as possible, defending my radishes, spinach and other agricultural products against the wiles of groundhogs.

Teachers remain for me a source of rich inspiration. There was this teacher who showed his class a cheque. "What is it?" he asked. "A cheque, Sir," answered Johnnie. "And what can I get

for this cheque at the bank?" the teacher asked, probing the wisdom of his students. "Your salary, Sir," they answered, almost in chorus. Satisfied about his students' knowledge of lifeskills, the teacher continued, "Any more questions?" Little Mary sounded from the back of the room: "Teacher, where do you actually work?"

Carl Tuyl is a member of the Ontario Provincial Interfaith Committee on Chaplaincy and a chaplaincy co-ordinator in Canada for the Christian Reformed Churches.

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How does one counteract weightlessness of mind and soul?

None of the players of the four teams competing in Quebec City for the Memorial Cup knew that the cup was a memorial to hockey players who had died as soldiers during the First World War. The cup was very important to them as an award to the best Junior A team of 1991. It was also important to them because belonging to the best team in a league that exists solely for the purpose of developing players for the National Hockey League might stand them in good stead when the NHL draft is held. For the rest, what the cup stands for meant nothing to them.

It's not a big thing, but it's an indication of how the past is often ignored in our society.

A young man I know works in a shop with a dozen or more other workers. His co-workers show little or no interest in each other's present life. He may ask them what they think, why they make the kind of choices they do. They never return the favour. It's as if there is absolutely no curiosity about how other persons develop, why they believe what they believe, how they got to where they are. Nothing in the present is worth exploring beyond what stares people in the face.

A secretary to the mayor of Greenfield Park, Que., was traumatized by two city workers who decided to play a prank on her. During a meeting with the mayor, at which she was present, one of them pulled out a handgun and shot a blank at the other, who acted as if he had been hit. The first man then pointed the gun at the secretary and she panicked. She was off work for weeks after that. Just a prank? No, it was stupidity and a sad ignorance of how a joke may affect another person. The future was not taken seriously by these men.

No weight, no glory

Os Guinness calls this phenomenon in modern society a loss of weight or a loss of glory (the two words mean the same in the Bible). Where there is no interest in the meaning of things past, present and future, there exists a state of weightlessness. Nothing matters very much and, consequently, there is no glory either for God or for human beings.

In a state of weightlessness there is no discernment between right or wrong, ugly or beautiful, loyalty or disloyalty, compassion or indifference, reliability or unreliability, growth or lack of it, purpose or aimlessness, justice or injustice, integrity or disconnectedness, wisdom or folly.

How do you explain, in an environment that suffers from lack of glory and meaning, that pornography is harmful, that vulgar language is demeaning, that carelessness is wasteful and that laziness is destructive? There are no hooks in that place on which to hang these ideas. Nothing holds; nothing sticks. There are no filters that will strain out nuggets of responsibility.

Whenever we allow our lives to become weightless, God in turn declares us weightless, as he did with Nebuchadnezzar — "Weighed in the scale but found wanting." When there is no glory in our lives, our trains will not be headed for glory either. Hell for this generation may

well turn out to be an eternal state of indifference in which nothing matters. One minute will be like an eternity of staring at a blank wall.

Importance of questions

How does one prepare the upcoming generation so that they can be "weighty"? It's not a question of intellectual capacity for parents or children, thank the Lord, or else only the intellectual elite could be rescued. It's more a matter of parents creating an atmosphere where questioning is held in high esteem, where feelings are communicated and acknowledged, where a child is encouraged to look behind the obvious for the not so obvious. It's more a matter of taking time to stroll, read, talk and observe. It has to do with what happens at the dining room table, for example. Are people showing interest in each other and in what happened during the day?

I am reminded of what popular psychologist Leo Bascaglia once told an audience about his childhood. His father, a very simple labourer, would ask each child every time the family sat down for dinner to mention something they had learned in school that day. When Leo, for example, would say he had learned about rocks, his father would turn to his wife and exclaim, "Did you hear that, Mama? Leo learned about rocks today. Isn't that wonderful?" You can imagine that Leo's face would shine and that his sense of curiosity or his desire to learn about the world had been boosted by this simple act of appreciation from his father.

Vibrant homes

Schools are important in this matter of helping a child appreciate the meaning and weight of things. But homes are even more important in feeding the fire that must burn in human hearts if they are not to succumb to the influences in life that level interest and flatten meaning. Homes are places where children are fine-tuned or allowed to go out of tune.

It will depend on whether parents themselves are sensitive and alert, on whether they themselves have interesting jobs in stimulating workplaces. Too many parents have placed a large paycheque ahead of vital and significant work, and their children end up paying the price by not growing up in a home where the spiritual, mental and emotional vibes are nurturing. Homes should be places where children are encouraged to be creative and involved and where the world is presented as pregnant with meaning.

Being alert spiritually, emotionally and mentally may not be the same as being saved, but it sure helps the process of sanctification. Blessed are those who are interested in life and know how to discern; who can see eternity in a grain of sand and fallen soldiers in a memorial cup; who take time to consider the implications of a prank and take an interest in fellow workers; who understand that our world belongs to God in all its expressions of past, present and future.

BW

Letters

Thanks for pointing out subtle assumptions

Thank you, Stephanie Baker Collins, for expressing your thoughts, feelings and experience as a child of God and as a woman in the church in such an articulate, intelligent and gentle manner (C.C. May 17). It was a relief, a pleasure and an encouragement to read!

My own experience parallels yours, and I identified closely with all you wrote. The contradiction between my experience as a child of God and the church's insistence that my gender is the most important defining characteristic of my self and the avenues of service open to me leaves me feeling confused, angry and guilty.

What is most frustrating is not so much the church's explicit, institutionalized limitations based on gender (although those are painful too), but the more subtle assumptions about the importance of gender which we all, often unconsciously, hold. In fact, these assumptions are so subtle that pointing them out usually leads to reactions such as: "Don't you think you're over-reacting?" or "Oh come on, you know we don't really *mean* to imply such a thing."

Yet if we truly wish to live out the fact that in Christ there is neither "Greek nor Jew, slave nor free, male nor female," we must become aware of these assumptions. Pretending they don't exist will only increase their power to limit and define people by criteria apart from their whole humanness.

These false criteria not only include gender, but race, social class, marital status, culture, profession. These things are not irrelevant to a person's self, but ultimately we stand before God and before each other as *whole human beings*, unique because we all differ in our mix of personality, life experience, gifts, gender, race, economic status, culture, opportunities and so on.

So thanks for stepping back and focusing on the bigger picture of women's place in the church, and for reminding us that our attitudes and decisions are not just theological exercises, but that they affect human beings — both women and men!

Heather Looy
Smithville, Ont.

Needed: critical analysis of money matters

I was quite surprised to see the addition of the "Financial Fare" column in your paper recently. A biblical discussion of financial management is what is needed, not a reworking of Brian Costello or the "Freedom 55" mentality clothed in Christianity. This fare is foul.

I take exception, not with the mathematical relationships and financial rules given (it is true that if we adhere to them we will become wealthy and not remain among those who "wonder where they went wrong"), but with the underlying philosophy.

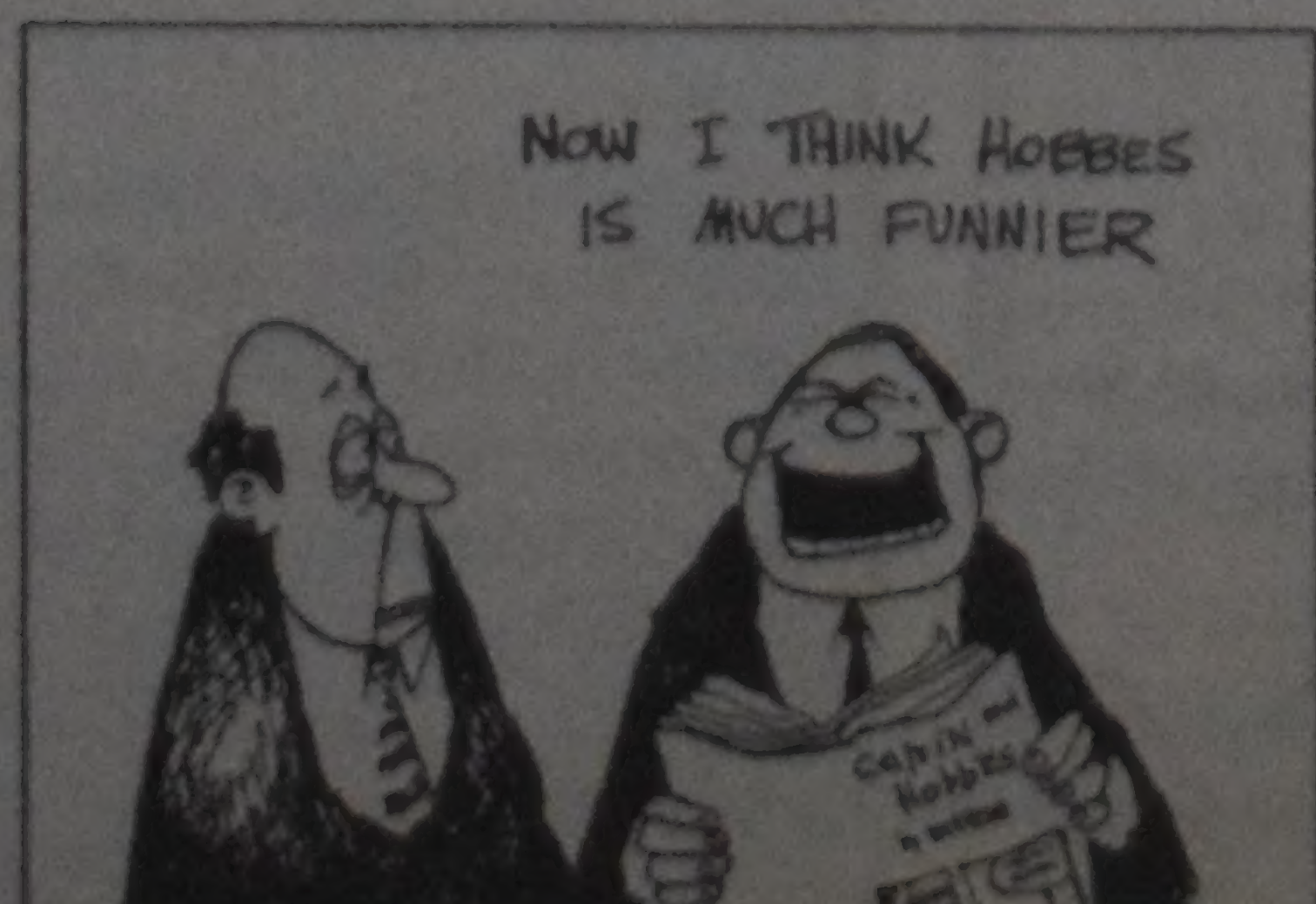
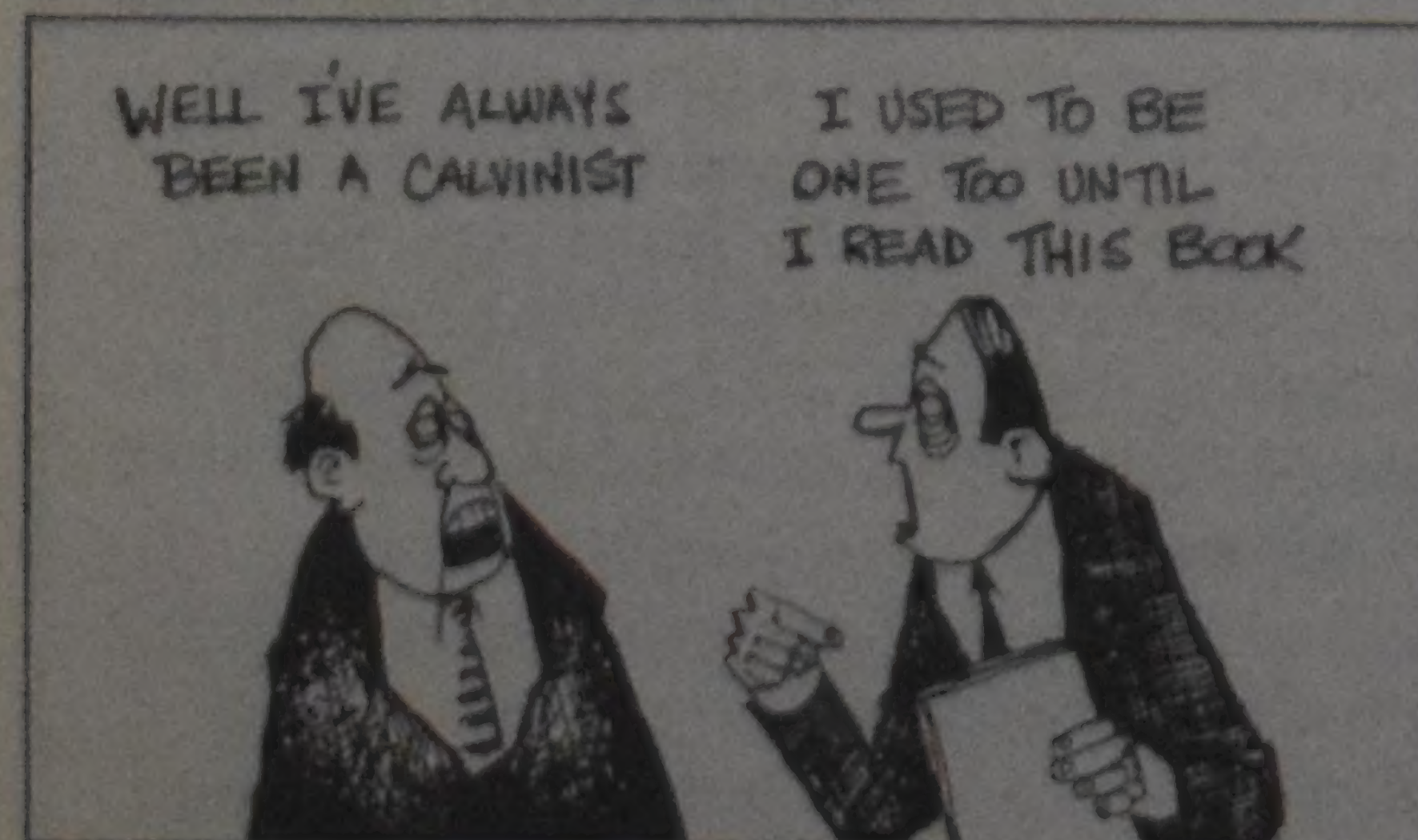
The philosophy? Individualism and non-responsibility for others. Proof can be found throughout the two columns written so far by Leonard Bick. Reread them and look for the author's thoughts on giving or donations, trusting others and God in all things, our responsibility

for the poor and God's purpose for giving one the talent for making money. What the column describes is the necessary result of humanity's fallenness and not a redeeming Christian response to it.

It is time that we develop a concept of financial stewardship that develops our love for, dependence upon, and trusting of God and our neighbours. Promote contentment and living simply, as the early church did, so that we can live for others. *Calvinist Contact* can assist in developing this vision by providing a forum for critical analysis of conventional financial wisdom rather than promoting it. Let's work through the Scriptures together. I trust that you, as editor, will consider my concerns seriously.

Doug Kloet
Hamilton, Ont.

BEYOND BELIEF



Marian den Boer

Like the Lilies



A mouse in the house

We first realized we had a mouse in our house when a guest nonchalantly pointed it out to us, "You know you have a mouse, eh?"

"No!" I squeaked in mild panic.

"He was right on your basement steps. He showed me to my room."

The mouse, a small, furry, scampering creature and prototype of thousands of lovable characters in children's storybooks, has capabilities to frighten me, a full-grown, middle-aged woman, beyond all proportions. It's not logical.

What can a little mouse do to a grown woman? I mean besides chew at my garbage, eat holes in my bag of flour and leave little black droppings among my pots and pans. I'll tell you what it can do. It can make me scream, jump up on the furniture and yell for my husband, Marty.

No dummy

Marty decided we would trap this particular mouse. Before retiring for the evening after our observant overnight guest left, Marty set two mousetraps, one with cheese, one with peanut butter. In the morning both traps were still set. The cheese was untouched, but the peanut butter had disappeared.

A smart little mouse, with particular tastes, we decided.

Marty tried again...three times. Each time the peanut butter was gone, the cheese went untouched and the traps were still loaded.

Rat poison, we decided.

We set out a plastic margarine tub filled with rat poison. I printed RAT POISON on it. Marty heaped the white granules into a small mountain. If a mouse visited the poison we would know. Night after night we set out the poison. Night after night it went undisturbed.

"Maybe the mouse can read," I wondered.

"But it says rat poison," comforted Marty.

Then one evening as I was quietly lounging in the living room, engrossed in a Catherine Cookson novel, I was startled into reality by Marty whacking about in the kitchen with a yardstick.

"What's going on?" I came rushing to the kitchen.

"He was under the fridge. Now he's under the stove," yelled Marty. "You stand in the doorway to the dining room and make sure he doesn't get through," he grinned.

New approach

I screamed and climbed up on the dining room table. After several minutes, all was quiet. I cautiously peered into the kitchen. Marty had the stove pulled away from the wall and was staring at a jagged two-centimetre hole in the wall where the baseboard ended at the corner.

Several minutes later he had the hole boarded and nailed over. He returned the stove to its position, not without retrieving a spatula, a toothbrush and a candy thermometer. Now how did that stuff get back there?

That's when we set a few grains of poison, unmarked on a plastic lid under the stove.

That Saturday when we returned from a afternoon outing, the lid was protruding from beneath the stove. Marty checked. It was empty. We refilled it. Sunday morning it was empty again.

Now we were laughing.

What'd he ever do to you?

That same evening Marty stuck a bucket under my nose. "Look what I found," he exclaimed. I glanced at the bucket.

"What?" I questioned impatiently.

"Just look."

I peeked into the bucket and screamed.

There was a little dead mouse curled up on its back. Even when they were dead, they frighten me.

"Go away...and don't put it in the kitchen garbage," I warned.

The next morning the poison had been nibbled and there were fresh droppings in my cupboards as well as a peculiar musty odour in our basement, like something died down there. I wondered how many mice we had — living and dead.

That evening I happened to read a newspaper article about roof rats terrorizing posh neighbourhoods somewhere in the States. It made me feel less harassed.

Marian den Boer is a free-lance writer who lives in Hamilton, Ont.

Hamilton Christian negotiates for Canadian truckers

Alison de Groot

ANCASTER, Ont. — Earlier this month Ontario was once again hit by trucking blockades. This time independent owner/operators tied up traffic on Highway 401, one of Toronto's main arteries and one of the country's busiest routes, for two days.

An estimated 1,200 trucks massed on the highway while others parked their rigs on Parliament Hill in Ottawa.

Last spring, owner/operators blockaded border crossings between Canada and the United States to draw attention to the unfair advantage they claimed U.S. truckers have.

Art Joesse knows all too well what the truckers' grievances are. Joesse, a member of Immanuel Christian Reformed Church in Hamilton, Ont., is president of Com Car Owner/Operator Association, national secretary of the Canadian Coalition of Owner/Operator Associations and a director of the Ontario Trucking Association.

Spontaneous blockades

Joesse was called upon by the coalition of owner/operator associations, which was set up after last year's border blockade upon the suggestion of provincial and federal ministers to make negotiations more effective, to try and settle this year's blockade situation in Ontario.

These blockades were totally spontaneous, according to Joesse, and not organized by any of the associations. Although Joesse says he is aware of the grave situation facing Canadian truckers, he is against these blockades, adding that most truckers agree with him.

Joesse, who says he brings a Christian perspective to his negotiations, says he worries about the "naked power these guys have now that they know what they can do."

"There are some radical elements within the industry who are really angry, and that's who these guys are," says Joesse. He says there are some truckers who are even angry at him for mediating.

However, the situation facing Canadian carriers is serious, says Joesse. In 1990, 656 of Canada's 6,000 trucking companies closed for good, an increase in closures of 74 per cent from 1989.

In Ontario, where trucking employed about 200,000 people at its peak, 146 carriers went bankrupt last year, compared with 57 in 1989.

The truckers' main complaint is that deregulation of the industry, although it initially created a boon for some Canadian truckers, has forced them to compete with their



Photo: Alison de Groot

Ontario independent owner/operators are worried about the future of the trucking industry in Canada.

U.S. counterparts who pay less for fuel, insurance, equipment and lower interest on loans to buy their equipment.

Unfair advantage

The Ontario Trucking Association estimates that the operating costs of U.S. truckers are 15 to 20 per cent below those of Canadian truckers.

And despite lower fuel prices, taxes, capital costs and tax write-offs enjoyed by Americans, the federal government opened the door for U.S. truckers to haul loads from one point to another within Canada. Yet more than 40 states still have laws preventing Canadian truckers from hauling loads between points in the U.S.

The final straw for truckers came when Ontario's New Democratic government

increased the provincial sales tax on diesel fuel by 1.7 cents per litre to 12.6 cents per litre on April 29 and by another 1.7 cents per litre scheduled for Jan. 1, 1992. In January, the new 14.3 cents per litre provincial sales tax rate on diesel fuel will be the third highest in North America behind Nova Scotia and Newfoundland.

Independent truckers are worried about the future of the industry in Canada.

"Five years ago there was \$2 billion worth of freight handled in Ontario by 500 carriers," says Charles Snow, president of Traffix, a Toronto-based brokering company. He said now there are probably 3,000 carriers competing for the same business.

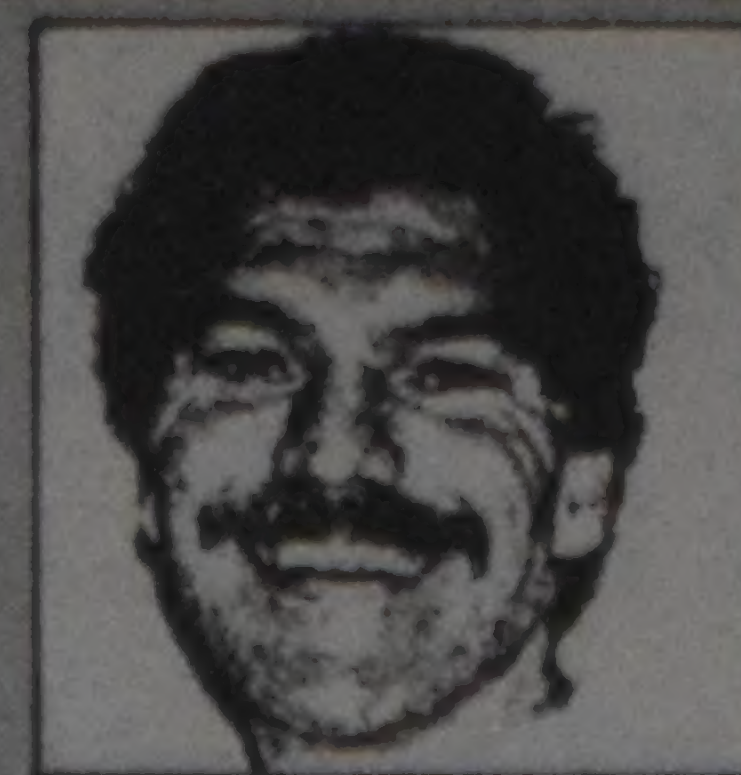
Provincial Transport Minister Ed Philip so far has only said that he is discussing the issue with the federal government and that the province is planning to do a report in July that studies the competitiveness between Ontario and U.S. truckers.

Provincial Finance Minister Floyd Laughren refused earlier to drop the new 1.7 cent tax on diesel fuel which came in the last budget. The tax was raised to promote conservation, according to Laughren. He, too, said he wouldn't make any decisions until the release of the report.



Photo: Alison de Groot

Art Joesse



Harry Spaling

Earthtenders



Our place and task in the environment

Greening the church

There is a desperate hunger for spirituality in our environmentally endangered world. The opportunity for the church to nourish this hunger has never been greater. But time is of the essence because the church's bleak record of inaction over the past 25 years has left a great vacuum which is being rapidly filled by spiritual imitators.

Society has long recognized that our environmental problems are ultimately spiritual problems. In 1967, a renowned article by Lynn White in the respected magazine *Science* blamed Christianity for today's ecological crisis. According to White, Christianity alienated humans from nature, which allowed them to exploit the environment for their own ends.

Since White's article, Christian authors such as Francis Schaeffer, Paul Schrotenboer, Loren Wilkenson and Wesley Granberg-Michaelson have regularly provided the church with biblical thought about Creation and its relationship to the Creator and to the creature (humans). Despite the contribution of these and other Christian thinkers, the church has fallen short in providing direction and leadership for Christians and non-Christians alike.

No zeal to protect God's world?

A recent survey of the 30 largest denominations in the United States, representing 95 million church-goers, found that only five denominations had established national environmental programs in which lay-persons can play a meaningful role. Seven are in the process of beginning programs, five are considering action, and seven have not yet begun to consider action. Notably, five denominations had official positions *not* to commit themselves to any environmental action. The survey was conducted for the North American Conference on Christianity and Ecology.

The minimal and delayed response of the church has made it possible for false images to fill the spiritual emptiness of millions of people seeking spiritual answers to environmental problems. The New Age movement, especially, has taken centre stage in offering ecological spirituality through notions such as mother earth, eco-feminism and deep ecology. Science has offered its own spiritual explanation in the Gaia hypothesis. Named after a mythical Greek goddess, this hypothesis suggests that the earth is a living organism intent on evolutionary self-survival, including ecological revenge on humans.

We all need to take action

The church is confronted with an urgent challenge but also an enormous opportunity. Three possible responses need consideration. First, the church needs to further develop its biblical view of Creation. A better understanding is needed of the Creator's delight in his creation, the praise-worthiness of Creation and stewardship of Creation. This understanding would challenge the traditional view of Creation as a resource base.

Second, the church needs a confessional approach to a hurting Creation. This year's overture from Classis Chatham to the synod of the Christian Reformed Church represents such an approach. The overture calls for a confessional statement with apologetic, prophetic, ethical and pastoral components and also a Reformed ministry. The 1991 Synod might find the previous Task Force on World Hunger (1978-79) a useful model for generating denomination-wide awareness, study materials and concrete action plans.

Finally, Christians need to be actively engaged in public advocacy, education programs and church-based projects. The work of Christians needs to be felt everywhere, from public policy to local neighbourhoods to individual families. Imagine the combined impact of Christian churches, schools, families and individuals, all working together for a praise-worthy Creation!

The world is eagerly seeking spiritual answers to its environmental problems. The church through Scripture has so much healing and hope to offer an environmentally endangered world. Will we look back 25 years from now and conclude unequivocally that the church has faithfully proclaimed healing and hope in a hurting Creation?

Harry Spaling is a doctoral student in geography at the University of Guelph, Guelph, Ont.

Cinema/Media

Missions magazine wins national award, third to National Geographic and Life

COLUMBIA, Mo. (EP) — For the second year in a row, *The Commission* magazine, the Southern Baptist Journal of Foreign Missions, has received a third-place award for best use of photography by a magazine in the annual "Pictures of the Year" competition sponsored by an American university and various companies with an interest in photography.

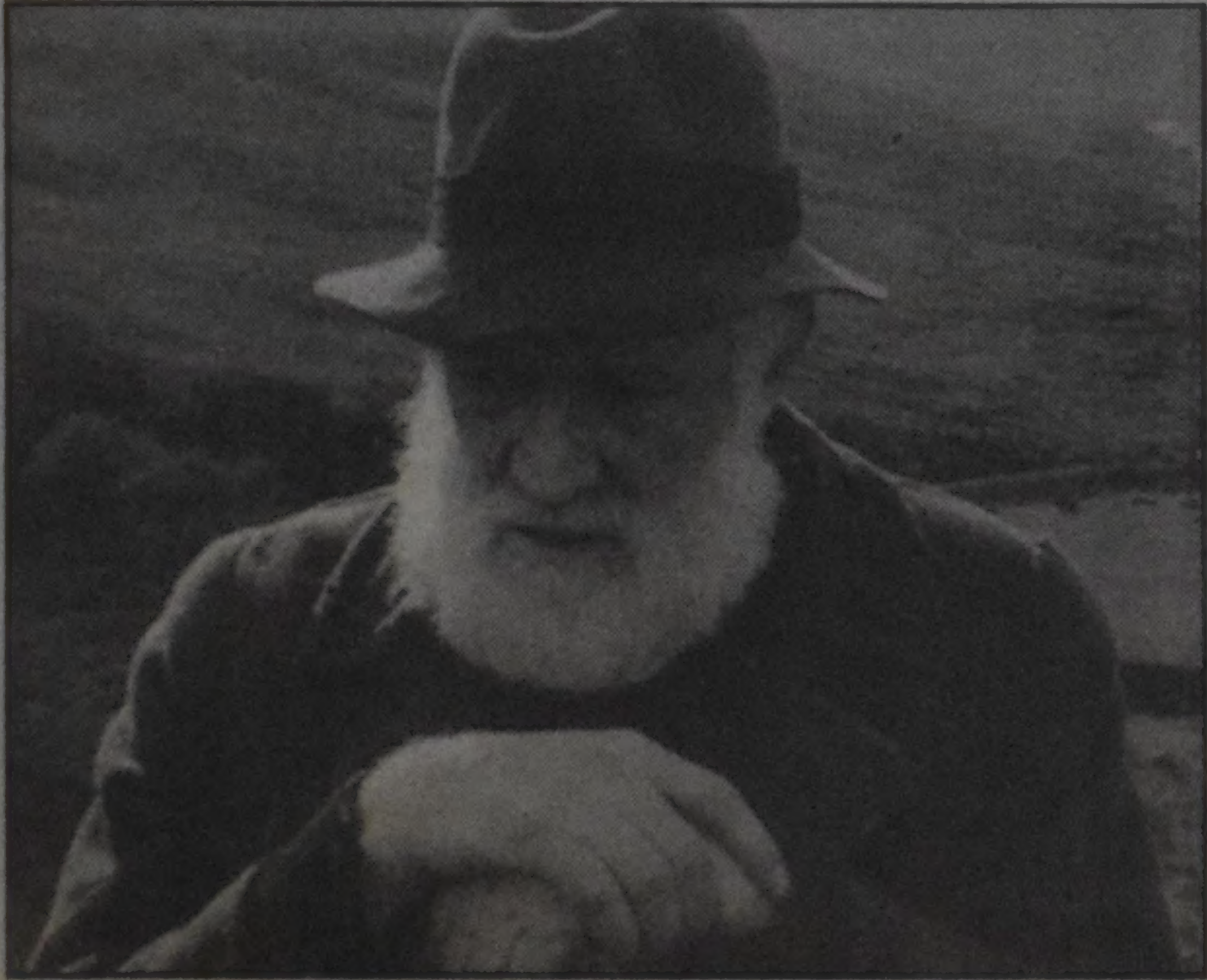
The Commission finished behind *National Geographic* and *Life* magazines in the national competition which is sponsored by the University of Missouri at Columbia, the National Press Photographers Association, Canon U.S.A., and Eastman Kodak. The contest attracts thousands of photographic entries each year to be judged by photographers and editors from newspapers, national magazines, and international news photo services.

The award marked the fourth time overall that *The Commission* has been recognized in the competition. The magazine earlier received awards of excellence in two consecutive years.

Cinema summaries

Marian Van Til

The Field



Rated PG
Stars Richard Harris, Tom Berenger, Brenda Frieis
Directed by Jim Sheridan

The Field takes place on the coast of Ireland some decades ago, but life there is so much as it has always been that the story is essentially timeless. It's a universal tale which deals with tradition and change, intense love for the land, the communality of the village, and a father/son and husband/wife relationship distorted by long years of near or total silence.

"Bull" McCabe is a fiercely independent village leader, a loner. He rents a field from a wealthy widow, like his father did before him. They transformed the field from a piece of barren earth into a lush and fertile pasture.

McCabe's whole existence is entwined with the field. He intends to buy it, finally, for his son, but the widow won't sell. (McCabe has never asked his son whether he *wants* the field. Not wanting it would show no appreciation for the land, something an Irishman like McCabe couldn't fathom.)

Then an American whose grandparents left Ireland during the devastating potato famine (1870s) appears in the village to look for his roots. He wants to buy the field and surrounding area, "develop" it, and build a dam on the nearby river, dragging the local people into the modern age, making them rich in the process, he says. He sees his plan as a legacy which he can leave on behalf of his Irish forebears.

McCabe is outraged. The man's family, after all, had left Ireland when the rest of them were starving — just like the English had; what kind of Irish can he be?

In the ensuing struggle over ownership of the field we see relationships subtly shift as characters change — some grow, some deteriorate. But *The Field*, contrary to what one might think, is not a wholly dreary story. It is subtle, complex and nuanced, and centres on a starkly beautiful land and a clannish but admirable people made strong by adversity.

This story brings to mind Shakespeare's tragic hero, King Lear: an honourable man's plans for his children are not suitable to their characters and they rebel; he then becomes obsessed with what he assumes to be their treachery, finally going mad.

It seems fitting that Richard Harris should play Bull McCabe; with this role he is making a come-back after a fight with alcohol and drugs which destroyed years of his life. Harris won an Oscar nomination for the role; he captures superbly the contradictions in McCabe's character and the coiled energy that must sooner or later explode.

Church holds actor 'captive'

HOLLYWOOD, Calif. (EP) — Actor John Travolta's continuing relationship with the Church of Scientology may have more to do with blackmail than with faith, according to a cover story in *Time* magazine. The magazine says Travolta fears that if he leaves the church, details of his sex life would be made public. "He felt

pretty intimidated about this getting out, and told me so," former Scientology chairperson William Franks told *Time*. "There were no outright threats made, but it was implicit. If you leave they immediately start digging up everything." "An attorney for the Church of Scientology called

the *Time* story "absolutely false." Scientology followers go through a counselling procedure called "auditing," where they are likely to share embarrassing or troublesome aspects of their lives. Cult authorities have expressed concern over the hold such information gives the church on its followers.

Edith Bunker a Christ figure?

COLUMBIA, S.C. (EP) — Television producer Norman Lear says the Edith Bunker character in his hit series "All in the Family" was based on Christ. "We always thought Edith would react to things exactly

the way Jesus would," Lear told *The State* newspaper in Columbia, South Carolina, in an article to promote his upcoming CBS series "Sunday Dinner." She's somebody who swallowed the Sermon on the

Mount and lived it. And that was always our guideline for Edith." Edith Bunker was a largely sympathetic character who brought a certain naive wisdom to a family ruled by her bigoted husband, Archie, who called her "dingbat."

Christians protest Islamic law in Sudan

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. (REC) — The government of Sudan ignored Christian protest against the introduction of Islamic law, the *sharia*, in January. John J. Chol, general secretary of the Presbyterian Church in Sudan, told a German audience that Christians had objected to the application of *sharia* to all citizens. The law came into

effect on January 1 and makes no distinction of other religions and cultures. Chol said he feared that closure of churches might follow. He said the civil war in Sudan had caused much suffering. His church has a severe shortage of pastors. About 5 per cent of Sudanese are Christian.

Evangelicals fear intolerance in Poland

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. (REC) — A government official in a Polish town told evangelical leaders that he would have to ask the Catholic priest before he could rent the town hall to them. Under the new government, there is official tolerance of non-Catholics, but at the local level evangelicals are finding discrimination. Some building sites for evangelical churches, approved under the old communist government, have been refused now because of opposition from priests.

Although Poland may be as much as 95 per cent Roman Catholic, evangelical groups are reporting growth. In particular they are attracting many university students and other youth. While the Catholic Church was a symbol of opposition during the communist era, many are leaving it now that the country's leaders are Catholic. Evangelical leaders report there is a spiritual vacuum. People want to talk, and there is great openness to the Gospel, they report.

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Church

Marian Van Til, page editor

Muslims and Christians clash in Nigeria, killing at least 80

LAGOS, Nigeria (EP) — Witnesses have reported that renewed violence between Muslims and Christians in northern Nigeria has killed at least 80 people, according to *Baptist Press*. The Associated Press reported that the worst confrontation occurred April 23 in the city of Bauchi, where a dozen churches were set on fire. Southern Baptist missionaries

in Nigeria said a Baptist church and parsonage were burned in the city.

Bauchi is near Jos, where Baptists have significant work, and Gombe, where Southern Baptist missionaries Wiley and Geneva Faw live. The Faws, from Kentucky, were reported safe in their home April 24.

Witnesses also reported that thousands of Christians are

now trying to flee the Muslim-dominated north to southern Nigeria where more Christians live. The latest fighting reportedly started from a dispute over whether Christians and Muslims should use the same slaughterhouse. Security forces later broke up Muslim riots in the region, and the military governor declared a dusk-to-dawn curfew after the April 23

deaths.

Muslim attacks on Christians are not new to northern Nigeria, according to *Baptist Press*. In 1987, 13 people were killed and numerous Christian churches burned, including 13 Baptist churches. Five Baptist pastors lost their homes in the violence. Several Muslim mosques were also burned.

Muslim-Christian tensions have reportedly increased in Nigeria, Africa's most crowded country, as more young people have joined fundamentalist Muslim groups that demand obedience to strict Muslim laws by all citizens. Islamic teaching encourages followers to violence against both Christians and Jews, as well as those of other religions.

British Rabbi wins Templeton Prize for Progress in Religion

TORONTO (PFCI) — On May 27 the winner of the prestigious Templeton Prize for Progress in Religion, The Rt. Hon. Lord Jakobovits, Chief Rabbi of Great Britain and the Commonwealth, was honoured at a special ceremony.

Over the past 50 years, Lord Jakobovits has emerged as a

controversial, yet respected world religious leader known for his moderation and compassion on Arab/Israeli issues, his approach to inter-faith relations and his originality in interpreting traditional values of Judaism.

The Templeton Prize, awarded annually to a living person who has advanced

humankind's understanding of God, is worth 410,000 pounds sterling (approx. \$858,000 Cdn.) and is the world's most valuable prize.

Lord Jakobovits was presented with the award in London, England by H. R. H. Prince Philip on Tuesday, May 7, at a private ceremony at Buckingham Palace. Prior to

the ceremony, The Hon. Lincoln Alexander, Lt.-Gov. of Ontario hosted a private reception for Lord Jakobovits in his suite at Queen's Park.

This is the first time that public ceremonies in connection with the presentation were held in Canada. In addition to the ceremony in Toronto on May

27, a similar event took place in Vancouver on May 29 at Canada Place with B.C. Lt.-Gov. David Lam presiding.

The Templeton Prize was established in 1972 by Sir John Templeton, the pioneer global investor. Past winners have included Mother Theresa, Alexander Solzhenitsyn and Rev. Billy Graham.

Bible distributor, publisher, join hands in distributing Scripture for Europe's children

SOUTH HOLLAND, Ill. (EP) — The Bible League (formerly called the World Home Bible League) and the David C. Cook Foundation will be teaming up to provide Christian children in Eastern Europe with 1.5 million copies of *Cook's Illustrated New Testament* by the end of 1993, according to a Bible League report. In addition, the League

will also print and place three million copies of *The Life of Jesus*, also a David C. Cook publication.

These "picture Bibles" with evangelistic helps will be printed in the six major languages of Eastern Europe: Romanian, Bulgarian, Polish, Slovak, Hungarian, and Czech, according to the Bible League. "The need most often

expressed by church leaders in Romania and elsewhere in Eastern Europe is for the children's Bible stories," said Rev. Dennis Mulder, executive director for The Bible League.

The Bible League will fund the printing, and Cook will co-ordinate distribution among churches in Eastern Europe who have agreed to use the material for religious

instruction or outreach.

"Of all the materials available, these full-colour story books are among the best we've seen," Mulder said. "Millions of Eastern European believers

and their children will thank God for them. We also believe that God will use these colourful books to communicate the Gospel for the first time to many adults."

Take advantage of our Directory page which will run in the June 14 issue.

FROM COAST TO COAST

BRITISH COLUMBIA			NOVA SCOTIA		
Abbotsford-CFVR	7:30 am	850	Digby-CKDY	6:00 am	1420
Burns Lake-CFLD	9:15am	1400	Kentville-CKEN	8:30am	1490
Kitimat-CKTK	8:30 am	1230	Middleton-CKAD	8:30am	1350
Osoyoos-CKOO	8:30am	1490	New Glasgow-CKEC	7:30am	1320
Penticton-CKOK	8:30am	800	Sydney-CJCB	8:00am	1270
Port Alberni-CJAV	10:30 am	1240	Weymouth-CKDY	8:30am	103.1
Prince George-CIBC	8:30am	94.3	Windsor-CFAB	8:30am	1450
Princeton-CKRP	8:30am	1460			
Smithers-CFBV	9:15am	1230	ONTARIO		
Summerland-CKSP	8:30am	1450	Ajax-CHOO	9:30am	1390
Vancouver-CJVB	9:00am	1470	Atikokan-CFAK	10:30am	1240
Vernon-CJIB	9:30pm	940	Burlington-CING(fm)	7:30pm	107.9
ALBERTA			Chatham-CFCO	9:30pm	630
Brooks-CKBR	8:00 am	1340	Guelph-CJOY	9:00pm	1460
Edmonton-CHQT	7:30am	880	Hamilton-CHAM	7:30am	820
Edson-CJYR	10:00am	970	Kapuskasing-CKAP	9:00am	580
Fl. McMurray-CJOK	8:30 am	1230	Kingston-CFMK	10:00am	96.3
St. Albert-CHMG	7:00 am	1200	Newmarket-CKAN	8:00am	1480
Taber-CKTA	8:00am	1570	Oshawa-CKAR	8:00 am	1350
MANITOBA			Owen Sound-CFOS	10:30am	560
Altona-CFAM	9:30am	950	Pembroke-CHRO		
Steinbach-CHSM	9:30am	1250	(Sat.)	6:30pm	1350
Winnipeg-CKJS	9:15am	810	Pembroke-CHRO	10:00am	1350
NEW BRUNSWICK			Slt. Ste. Marie-CFYN	10:00am	1050
Fredericton-CFNB	6:30am	550	St. Catharines-CKTB	10:00 pm	610
Newcastle-CFAN	9:00am	790	Sarnia-CHOK	7:30am	1070
Saint John-CHSJ	9:00am	700	Stratford-CJCS	8:45am	1240
PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND			Windsor-CKLW	9:00am	800
Charlottetown-CFCY	7:00am	630	Wingham-CKNX	10:30am	920
QUEBEC			Woodstock-CKDK(fm)	8:00am	102.3
Montreal-CFQR(fm)	7:30am	92.5			

THE BACK TO GOD HOUR



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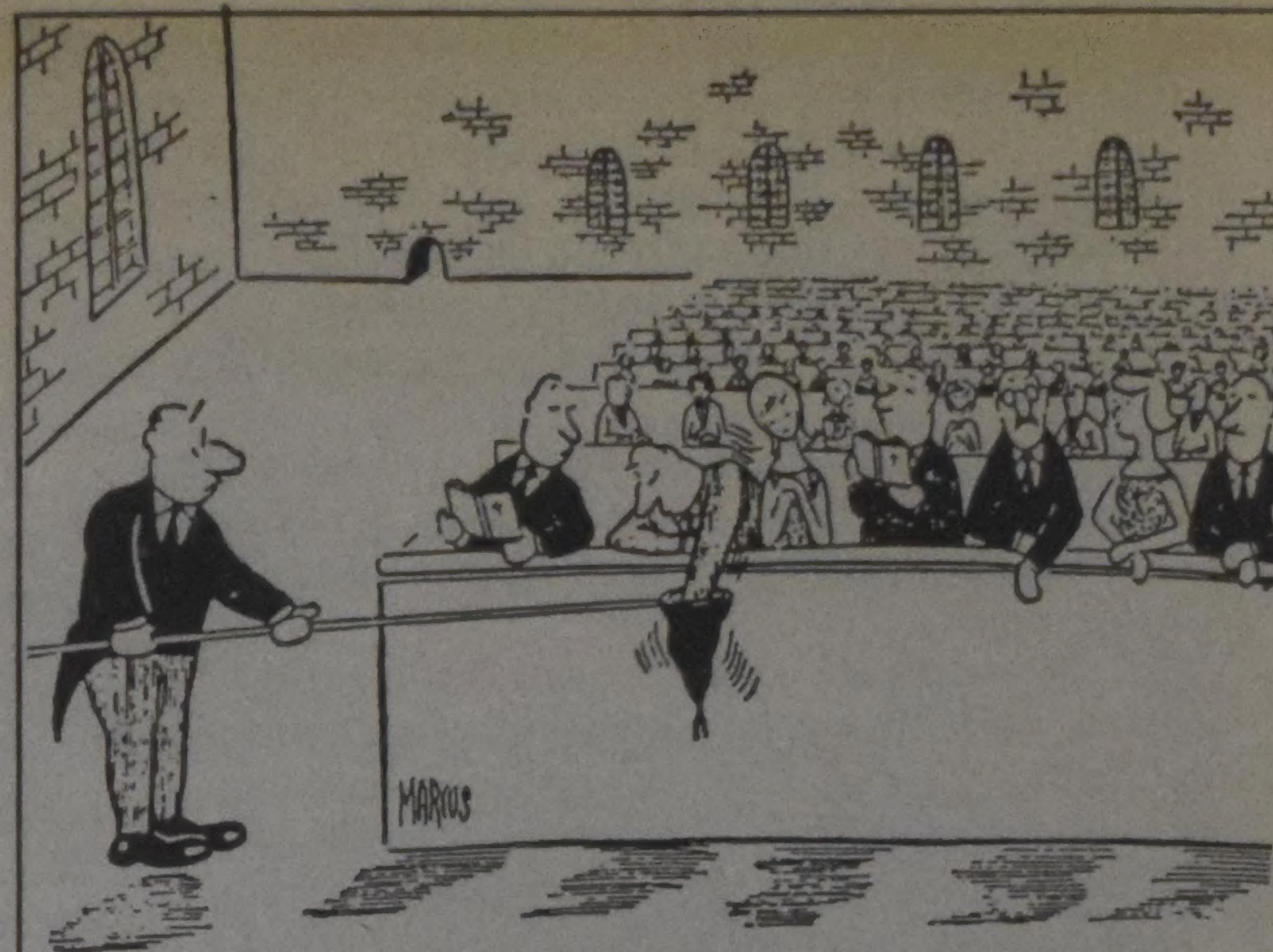
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Being a deacon

The nice part was the installation
the difficult part, the first meeting
The nice part was you could speak your mind
the difficult part, how to come to an agreement
The nice part was that we did make decisions
the difficult part, who was to carry them out?
The nice part was the liturgy of the service
the difficult part, getting the stuff printed up
The nice part was collecting money
the difficult part, how to approach the poor
The nice part was the Lord's Supper
the difficult part, should children partake?
The nice part was the profession of young people
the difficult part, the attention needed for the elderly
The nice part was to congratulate
the difficult part, to offer condolences
The nice part was the youth work
the difficult part, to keep them in the church
The nice part was to have a good successor
the difficult part, to leave the work behind.

Illustration and poem from the *Friese Kerkbode*
Translated and adapted by Bert Witvoet

U.S. congressmen discuss religious freedom issues with Chinese leaders

Andrew Wark

HONG KONG (NNI) — Two United States congressmen, on a three-day visit to China in late March, met with Chinese Premier Li Peng and other high ranking Chinese Communist Party officials and warned that China's Most Favoured Nation (MFN) trading status with the U.S. was in jeopardy if it did not improve its human rights and religious freedom record.

MFN was granted last year after a move to restrict in the Senate was blocked. MFN has been given to China unhindered since 1980. In addition, China's trade surplus was \$6 billion in 1989, \$10.5 billion in 1990 and could be \$12 billion in 1991. Wolf said that some U.S. businessmen would

not object if the government made it more difficult for Chinese imports to enter the country, according to a report in the *Washington Times*.

U.S. Congressional Representatives Christopher Smith and Frank Wolf presented Premier Li Peng with a letter signed by 110 members of Congress, asking for the release of 77 Chinese Christians who have been imprisoned or placed under house arrest. The list of names includes Catholic bishops, priests and Protestant leaders that have been incarcerated for religious reasons.

Li Peng accepted the letter but told the congressmen that China's leaders "are not in the position to make decisions

regarding the judiciary."

"He did say that he would have the judiciary look into it," said Smith at a Hong Kong press conference held immediately following the China trip. "We pointed out that human rights are the cornerstone in our relations with China and that the continuance of MFN in the 1990s will largely be conditioned on a true test of human rights adherence."

The congressmen met Chinese officials in Beijing and Shanghai, raising issues pertaining to religious freedom abuses, the recent trials and detention of pro-democracy students, and China's forced abortion and controversial family planning programs.

While in Beijing they visited the Beijing Number One prison but were unable to meet with any of the religious and political prisoners with whom visits had been requested.

"The prison officials," said Wolf, "said that the prisoners did not want to meet with [us] although we did not tell them

ahead of time that we were going to visit the prisons. We just went and had a general conversation with the warden of the prison and then submitted names of prisoners; and each time, they said that the prisoner did not want to see us. So were were really denied [prisoner visits]."

Chinese leader warns of rising religious influence in rural areas

Andrew Wark

HONG KONG (NNI) — One of China's most senior political leaders, Vice-president Wang Zhen, warned the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) in a recent speech that it is losing its "village" power base due to the influence of religion and the development of capitalism and clans.

The speech, entitled "The Challenge of Feudalistic Forces in Villages," is thought to have been given earlier this year and sent to all senior party officials nationwide.

Within his address, Wang expressed alarm over the increasing appeal of religion among China's rural population and the decreasing interest in Communist Party activities.

"Fewer and fewer people want to be enrolled in the party or the Communist Youth League, yet more and more want to join religious groups," said Wang. "While the words of CCP cadres in villages have little appeal, the response to religious figures is overwhelming."

Wang reported that in Henan Province, central China, the number of Christians had grown from

400,000 in 1982, to over 1 million in 1990. In one county in Hebei Province, northern China, he said 813 people had become Catholics while only 270 joined the CCP.

The Vice-president, known as one of the "eight major elders" of the CCP and a key force behind the 1989 crackdown on the Chinese pro-democracy movement, said the prestige and vitality of the party had fallen to a record low.

He complained that in many counties throughout Qinghai Province, in China's remote northwest, it was necessary to obtain the approval of church leaders before [party-related] mass meetings could be held. In one county in Hebei Province, authorities admitted that last year they asked a Catholic priest to persuade local farmers to sell their grain to the government.

The Chinese leader said that, while religious activities were drawing large crowds, meetings organized by party cells were poorly attended — despite the fact that each attendee was paid one yuan (U.S. \$0.22).

Word and Spirit

Andrew Kuyvenhoven



God's goal of salvation is our good works

In my youth I was brainwashed into thinking that no other Christian had as good a knowledge of God as a Calvinist. And I was taught to believe that no church had grasped God's revelation as firmly as the church to which I belonged. Since that time I have debunked many myths about the grandeur of the reformed tradition. But I have also learned to value certain treasures in the Reformed heritage as true gold, never to be squandered.

One of the most characteristic traits of the Reformed faith is its insistence that grateful obedience is the only fitting response to God's saving grace.

Other traditions teach that when a person is saved, he or she has to tell others where the water of life is to be found. Evangelism or mission is the right response to salvation.

'Joy, joy, joy' or grateful obedience?

Or they teach that the result of saving faith is happiness — a radiant joy that's "in your heart to stay." Still others say that praise and more praise, songs and words that magnify the Lord, are the sure signs of saved souls. But Calvinists say that the one characteristic feature of the lives of the redeemed is grateful obedience to the will of their Saviour and Lord.

Loving obedience (not slave-like but child-like) is God's goal throughout redemptive history. It's the one thing Adam had to prove and Israel never learned. But the promise of the new covenant spoke of a forgiven people that would have God's law in heart and mind; that is, they would obey God from inner compulsion (promised in Jer. 31:33, fulfilled in 2 Cor. 3:3).

The law of Sinai could never bring people to true obedience. However, the Gospel and the Spirit did bring it about.

The Gospel of Jesus Christ breaks the power of cancelled sin. It sets us free to obey the Lord. That's the point of Romans 8:1-4, which is the heart of the Gospel as Paul preached it. The Good News of what God has done in Christ is

designed to bring the whole world to faith and obedience (Rom. 1:5; 16:26).

When God came to invade our planet through Jesus Christ, his ultimate goal was not saving sinners from death and hell. That's his negative work, just as plowing a field and uprooting the weeds are the preparation for planting the desired vegetables and flowers. The good works of redeemed lives were God's real objectives. We have been saved by grace and now "we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works which God prepared in advance for us to do" (Eph. 2:10).

Law as rule of gratitude is profoundly biblical

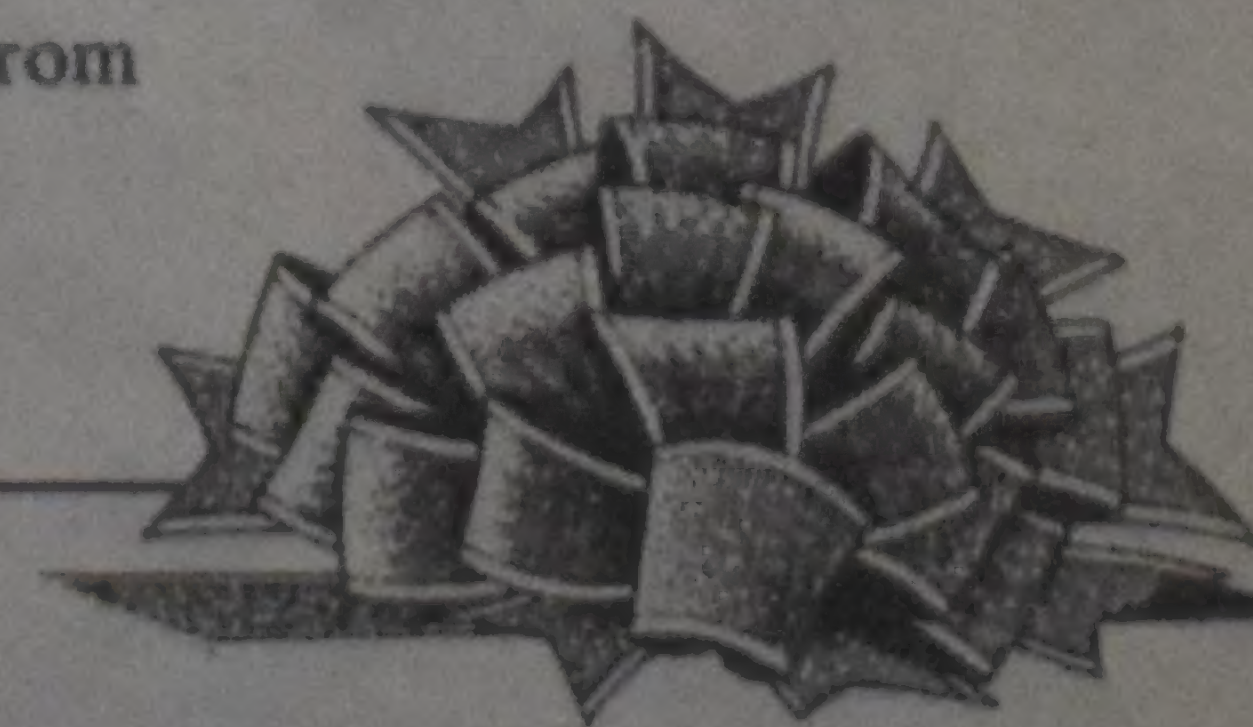
In the *Heidelberg Catechism*, the confession which has always been closest to the heart of the Reformed Churches, the law functions as a rule of gratitude. The Ten Commandments are used as an educational tool to teach the redeemed community a life of grateful obedience. That's profoundly biblical and one of the best traits of the Calvinists' faith.

We must work hard these days to retain this Reformed emphasis on obedience as the only fitting response to salvation by grace. If we are saved, we do the will of the Lord; but if we continue to be disobedient we are probably not saved.

Mission and verbal praise-giving, which other Christian groups consider the central responses to salvation, are certainly integral parts of a life of gratitude. Their emphases on these virtues often highlight our neglect of them. Let's be humble enough to learn from others.

However, the greatest Christian virtue is love. And love is more than a smile and a kind word. Love is the fulfilment of the law (Rom. 13:8, 10).

Andrew Kuyvenhoven is pastor of Bethel Christian Reformed Church, Waterdown, Ont.



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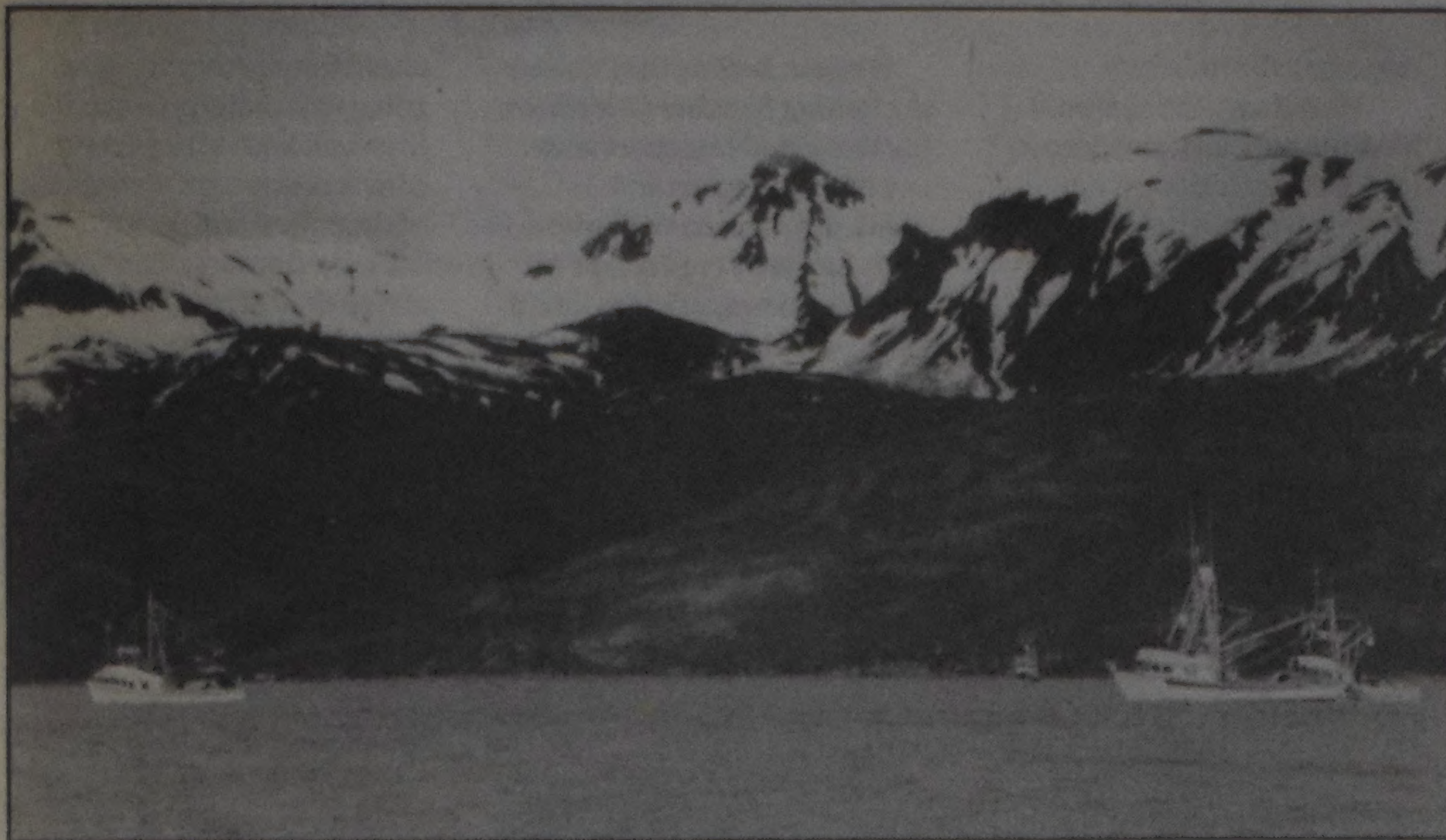
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Feature



Fishing boats in Chignik Lagoon

**Alison de Groot
and Michael Jellema**

Alyeska, "the Great Land," more commonly known as the state of Alaska, has an irresistible way of life for those who live there and is an unforgettable experience for those who visit. Sprawling across 580,000 square miles, Alaska is one-fifth the size of the entire lower 48 states and contains more than half of all the United States' parklands in nearly 100 state parks.

This is a land where bald eagles and brown bears are a common sight. A land where a strange mix of Russian-, Norwegian-, Anglo-Americans and Native peoples populate farms, fishing villages and

mining and drilling towns.

Alaska is now more accessible than ever and more popular than ever. Travel options are varied, ranging from coastal cruises to driving the 1,920 km Alaska Highway that stretches from Dawson Creek, British Columbia, to Delta Junction, Alaska.

Alaska was officially transferred to the United States on Oct. 18, 1867, having been purchased from Russia by Secretary of State William H. Seward for \$7,200,000 (about two cents an acre). At the time, Americans scoffed at the purchase, calling Alaska "Seward's Folly" or "Seward's Icebox."

For more than a decade not much attention was paid to this

distant land until 1880, when Joe Juneau and Richard Harris, a pair of gold seekers, stumbled into a gold-laden creek in Southeast Alaska.

Gold changes history

Then came the big Gold Rush of 1897 when more than 100,000 fortune hunters swarmed to the Klondike gold fields. The cry of "Gold!" screamed across headlines worldwide, bringing stories of lawless mining towns such as Skagway and Nome, and publicizing the antics of notorious bad guys such as Jefferson "Soapy" Smith. While greatly exaggerated, the stories helped Alaskans to bring law and order to the wild and woolly territory, according to the Alaska Chamber of Commerce.

Over the next 50 years Alaska would gain territorial status and congressional representation and would see fledgling timber, fishing and mining industries begin to flourish.

World War II and Alaska's recognition as a militarily strategic point brought roads, airports and harbours throughout the state, providing access to once remote outposts.

The Alaska Highway was completed in 1942, in the astonishing time of eight months and twelve days. More than 11,000 troops worked on the road, building 8,000 culverts and 133 bridges. Today, after nearly 50 years of continuous upgrading, the highway is a modern thoroughway with towns and services, including campgrounds, lodges and restaurants an average of 80 km apart along the route.

A combination of the British Columbia Ferry Corporation and the Alaska Marine Highway System offers access to the northern state along the west coast. British Columbia provides scheduled ferry service between Port Hardy, on Vancouver Island, and Prince Rupert, with departures every

Alaska:

'the Great Land'



Ice from the Portage Glacier drifts calmly.

other day in the summer. The trip takes 15 hours and costs around \$300 for two people with a car.

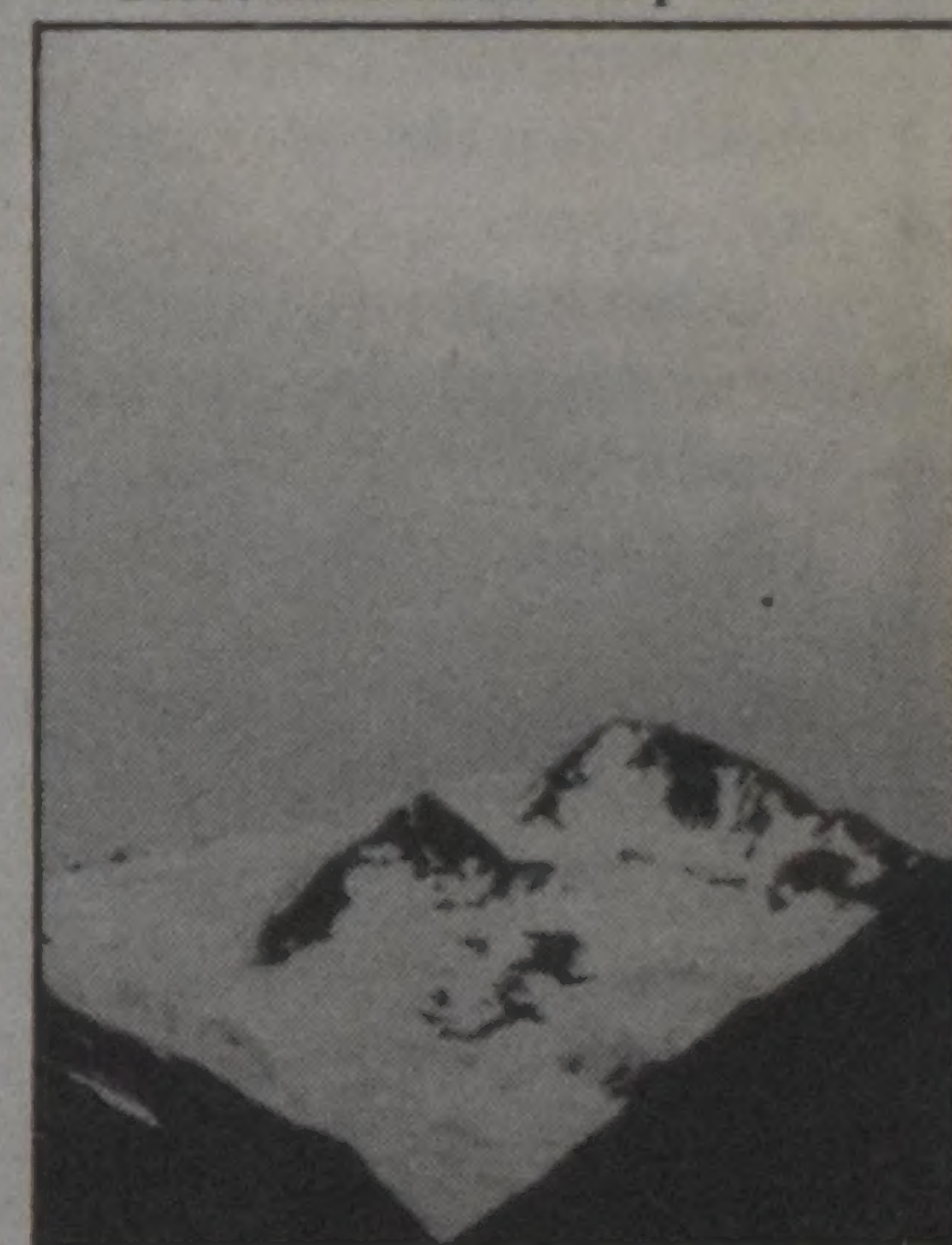
From Prince Rupert, the two routes of the Alaska Marine Highway can be used to travel between over 20 destinations within Alaska. The ferries carry vehicles as well as passengers and feature food service, sightseeing lounges and staterooms. Travelers without staterooms may sleep in public lounges or on the solarium deck. Short local tours are available in many communities to coincide with ferry stopovers.

Not cheap

Air Canada flights to Seattle, Washington, can be combined with Air Alaska flights for those in a hurry to get to the Great Land. During the summer season, flying mid-week, a return Air Canada flight between Vancouver and

Seattle will run about \$120 per person; Edmonton to Seattle, 295; and Toronto to Seattle, \$595. From Seattle, a return Air Alaska flight to Anchorage will cost an additional \$435. However, an "Air Alaska Vacation" tour including three nights in Juneau and three nights in Anchorage for two is available for about \$1,555 U.S.

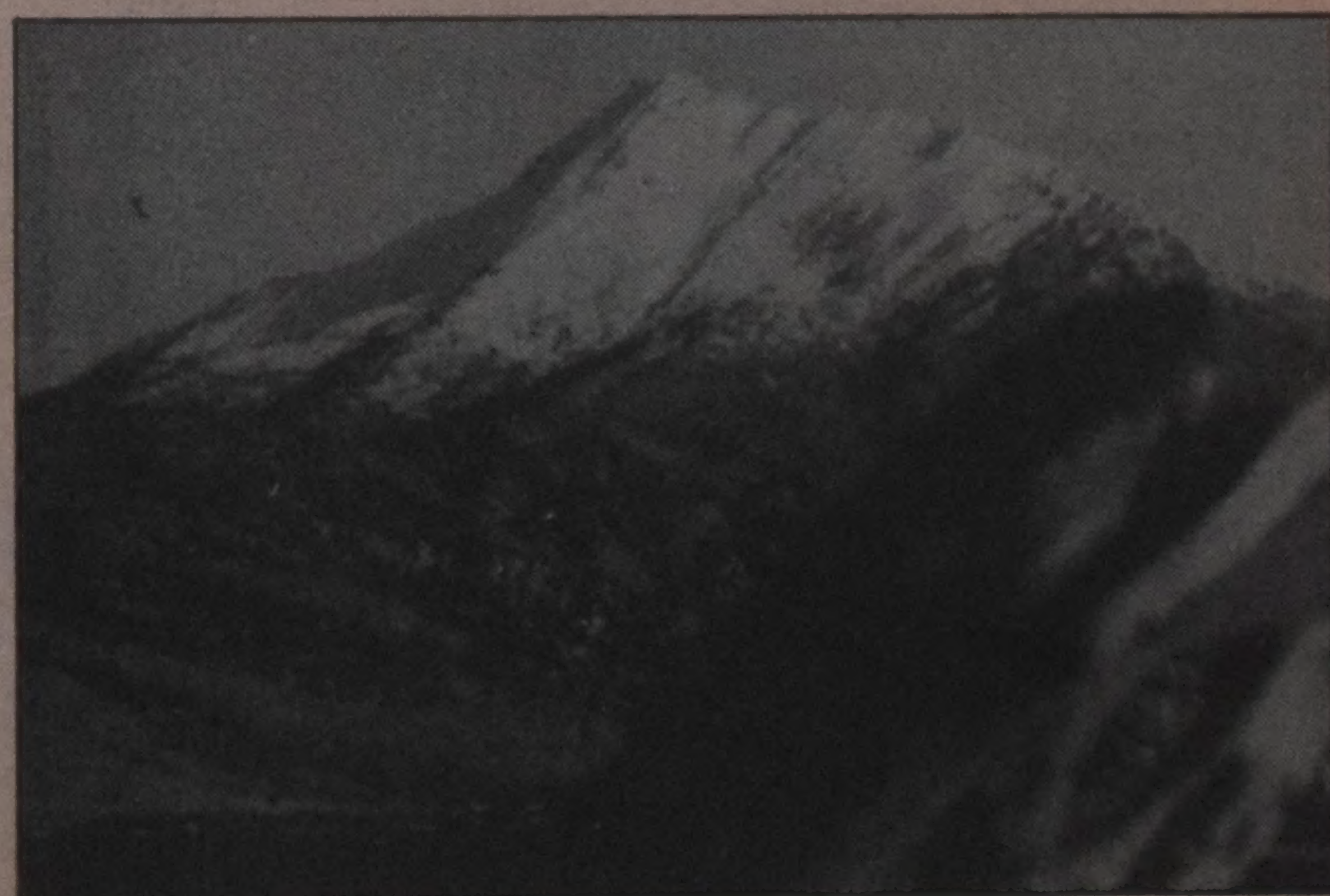
Once in Alaska the possibili-



The breathtaking Portage Glacier near Anchorage.



Moss covered trees create dense northern forests.



Mountains dot Alaska's coast.



White ice reflects the summer sun. Alaska is a land of contrasts.

"The experience of Alaska, although especially significant for me, is something which will affect everyone who sees it."

All photos by Michael Jellema



The rugged coastline of Kodiak Island.

Home to the Great Land

Michael Jellema

As a native, although not native-born, my indoctrination to and about Alaska started as soon as I could listen to the fantastic stories told by my Russian-Aleut-Norwegian mother.

Though the stories seemed tall at the time they were told, they couldn't compare with the grandeur of this wildest of American states when seen firsthand.

My first trip to my "hometown" and to my roots began with a visit to Kodiak Island where my mother was born. This "Emerald Isle" of the Alaskan Chain is the site of the oldest Russian settlement and the oldest Russian Orthodox Church in North America. The blending and distinctions between the cultures that share this island are evident everywhere. For example, my grandfather is buried in the U.S. cemetery on Kodiak and my grandmother in the Russian Orthodox or Native cemetery.

Kodiak's "semi-tropical" summer climate is home to abundant wildlife, including the world's largest land omnivore, the Kodiak bear.

My summertime impression

of Kodiak may not be Jack London's Alaska for the hardcore winter buffs; but the size of Alaska easily fools those not familiar with this state. For warmer-climate bodies like myself, the cold of Alaskan winters confounds the imagination. Relics of these cold, snow-blown centuries scour the mountains of the state in the form of glaciers.

The awe of seeing huge, carved chunks of glacial ice in baby blue, older than civilization, brings to mind questions about the "real" time of human life.

One small chunk will keep a drink cold all day long and one concrete-hard, softball-sized chunk will keep your cooler cold for days.

The Portage Glacier in Anchorage is about an hour from the airport. Another hour or so on foot and you can stand at the foot of the glacier.

Abundant salmon

I made another stop in Alaska, this one in Chignik Lagoon: the home and fishing village in which my Russian grandmother settled. Chignik boasts one of the world's largest salmon weirs (dams

built across streams to control water levels in order to catch fish) and one of the largest salmon catches in the Aleutian chain.

The two sides of the lagoon, on which are summer fishing villages, and a permanent settlement on Chignik Lake, are home to around 200 relatives of mine, a discovery I made as recently as 1984.

Alaska's coastline in the Chignik area is rugged. The rocks are black and dotted with waterfalls. The local children easily find eagle feathers to bring you and perfectly round rocks which amaze the visitor and amuse the kids (the rocks are actually petrified fish droppings).

The experience of Alaska, although especially significant for me, is something which will affect everyone who sees it. The diverse and friendly people and breath-taking and equally diverse scenery make Kodiak Island and all of Alaska a place of dreams.

Michael Jellema is a 25-year-old freelance photographer who now lives in Cabin John, Maryland. Michael and his immediate family are members of the Washington, D.C., Christian Reformed Church.

ties are endless. The diverse population includes the descendants of the Russian fur traders who put Alaska on the map; the Inupait, Yup'ik, and Pacific Eskimos; Aleuts and Athabascans; and Tlingit and Haida Indians.

Diverse wildlife encounters are not only possible but probable in a state where 3,500 bald eagles reportedly gather each fall to feed on late-running salmon on the Chilkat River near Haines, north of Juneau. Admiralty Island, also in the southeast, is home to more brown bears than the rest of the U.S. combined. Great herds of caribou roam vast expanses of tundra in their age-old grazing patterns and salmon mysteriously find their way back to the streams of their birth annually.

This is the state where grizzly bears can be spotted foraging at the edge of meadows in Denali National Park, about 380 km north of Anchorage.

If managing this vast land expanse on your own seems overwhelming, the Alaska Railroad offers a scenic 560 km rail route between Fairbanks in the southeast and Anchorage via Denali. The railroad also continues between Anchorage, Seward and Whittier, connecting with the southcentral ferries.

The railroad provides a relaxed, organized way to get around. Large windows and dome cars offer unrestricted views of the changing Alaska landscape and wildlife. But the railroad isn't just a tool for

tourists and encounters with Alaskans who use the train to get to wilderness homesteads mean travellers aren't totally cut off from local inhabitants.

Accommodation in Alaska doesn't come cheap, and expense is one of the downfalls of visiting Alaska. In Juneau the average price per room based on double occupancy is \$90 U.S., although the range is from \$40 to \$145. Anchorage is about the same in price, although the choices are more varied and abundant.

If not for the frontier-feeling landscape or wildlife, visiting Alaska is an unprecedented experience in culture. Since the beginning, those who have settled Alaska have been in search of something: food and shelter, new trade routes, wealth or, quite often, a simpler way of life. This rich melting pot of adventurous, independent explorers — from the ancestors of the Eskimos to the English explorers and Russian fur traders, to the midwestern farmers who tamed the valleys, and today's new generation of homesteaders — these people all play a part in the way Alaska is shaped.

Alaska offers endless contrast between two worlds. As one writer put it: "...modern skyscrapers at the foot of snowcapped mountain ranges; 'bush' communities dotted with racks of drying fish and satellite dishes; tiny air taxis skittering across Anchorage's Lake Hood in the shadow of an Orient-bound 747."



The rocks along the south central coast are deep blue.

Eastern Europe

The Soviet Union is a 'spiritual Chernobyl'

Harry Antonides

"A Spiritual Chernobyl" — that's how Robert R. Reilly, who visited the Soviet Union three times last year, describes the situation in the U.S.S.R. (*Crisis*, February 1991). He explains: "Seven decades of the big lie have left a moral landscape more barren than the moon. The dimensions of this lie are so enormous that there is not an aspect of daily life undistorted by it. The normal reference points to life are gone."

Reilly recalls the warning issued by Czar Nicholas II's Minister of Finance, Sergei Witte, who wrote on October 9, 1905: "The idea of human freedom will triumph, if not by way of reform then by way of revolution. But in the latter event it will come to life on the ashes of 1000 years of destroyed history."

Witte's prophecy has been fulfilled in the Soviet Union, writes Reilly. "The family, religious faith, property, law — all lie shattered. Even the communists are appalled." Pavel Lungin, a Soviet film director said in an interview,

"Everyone is deformed, yet everyone wants to live a normal life. But they can't." As Reilly reminds us, normal life is based upon some recognition of the spiritual truth about humankind, but when dogmatic atheism blots out this truth, the results are evident everywhere in the form of wrecked institutions, utter cynicism and indifference to the well-being of others.

Many people look for renewal of the communist system through instituting a market economy. Yet there is very little understanding in the Soviet Union about the need for a more fundamental change, according to Reilly. People want to be free from the shortcomings of an inefficient and wasteful economy, yet they do not know or do not want to embrace a way of life that is nurtured in the truth about God and humanity. Egor Gaidar, the economic editor of *Pravda*, told Reilly that Western and communist societies have much in common because they share their interest in alleviating poverty and want. Reilly disagreed strongly: "We

have absolutely nothing in common. Marxism-Leninism is not an economic, social or political enterprise. It is a metaphysical enterprise whose purpose is the transformation of man into God and the world into a terrestrial paradise. You have succumbed to the oldest temptation of man, that whispered by the serpent to Eve: ye shall be as gods. In order for man to be a god, he must have no God before him. Therefore, your metaphysical enterprise requires atheism as its foundation."

Reilly unsuccessfully tried to convince the *Pravda* editor that the Gulag was a logical outcome of the atheistic premise of Marxism-Leninism.

A nagging question

Thus the debate continues. It's a debate that is also conducted in Western society, and it is formulated in the question: can humankind be good without God? (See the thoughtful article by Glenn Tinder in *The Atlantic Monthly*, December 1989.) Many in the West are confident that the answer to that question

is yes. But there is nothing in history to support that opinion. In fact, the opposite is true. As the Russian philosopher Nicolas Berdyaev said, "Where there is no God, there is no man either."

What could possibly transform the Soviet Union in such a way that it becomes a truly free and humane society? The obvious answer is a spiritual rebirth. Fortunately, Russian voices calling for such a change are not absent. For example, Zoya Krakhmalnikova exiled to Siberia for anti-Soviet Christian activism, has said, "Unless we return to Christian civilization, we will not renew our society." Krakhmalnikova pointed out that the Russian people are guided by ideas and need something to believe in. Stalinism was like a faith that promised paradise on earth. It failed. "Now people have lost faith in paradise on earth and are searching once again for eternal beliefs."

Reading this gripping description of the spiritual desolation in the Soviet Union leaves one with a nagging



Photo: The World Book Encyclopedia
Joseph Stalin, Dictator of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (U.S.S.R.) from 1929-1953.

question. If it is true that freedom and civilization cannot exist without belief in God, what are our prospects as a nation that is busy dismantling the remnants of a Christian culture in the name of democracy and human rights?

Harry Antonides is Director of the Work Research Foundation of Mississauga, Ont. Reprinted with permission from WRF Comment, April 1991

Albania and the 'Great Satan': friends at last



Dan Wooding

Can it be true? Albania has become friends with the 'Great Satan.' Yes, it is true. The United States has renewed diplomatic relations with Albania after a break of 52 years and has urged the last communist state of Eastern Europe to move ahead with democratic reforms.

How the world has changed!

Some five years ago (with the help of my British passport), I visited this mysterious land nestled between Italy, Yugoslavia and Greece that was attempting to extinguish the flame of Christianity by declaring that it does not exist. I was one of the first U.S.-based journalists to get into the country and I did so by going as a tourist through London, England.

To punch home its views on religion, I was given the official holiday brochure which explained, "As Albania is officially an atheistic state, Bibles and any other religious literature, whether or not for personal use, are not allowed to be brought into the country."

Church dead or underground

It was an eerie feeling to be in a land where it was illegal to be a Christian or even own a car, though donkeys and bicycles were okay. Albania was a nation locked in a time warp. It was in 1967 that the country's megalomaniac leader, Enver Hoxha, had decided that if God didn't exist, there was no point in having the country's 2,169 churches, synagogues and mosques open, so he closed them all and they were either destroyed or converted 'to more useful purposes' such as bars, museums, gymnasiums, film halls and palaces of culture.

While I was there, the once

flourishing Christian church dating back to the time of St. Paul, was either dead or underground. No public religious services were allowed. Before the communists seized power in 1944, Albania was 70 per cent Muslim, 20 per cent Albanian Orthodox, and 10 per cent Roman Catholic, with just a handful of Protestants. At the crackdown in 1967, all religious leaders were either executed or put in prison for long periods.

At the time of my visit there was life imprisonment for any Albanian who dared to practice religion in public. In 1975 the state went even further; the authorities published an initial decree on first names, warning parents to stay away from religious names. According to a decree passed by the People's Assembly, the highest organ of state power, parents could no longer give Christian or Muslim names to their children. First names had to be politically, ideologically and ethically sound. As with anything in Albania, severe penalties were imposed on violators.

Albania was not entirely without its god. Enver Hoxha, the "father of modern Albania" who ruled with an iron fist for more than 40 years until his death on April 11, 1985, was still 'worshipped.' His photographs were on buildings and roadside hoardings, while bookshops and tourist hotels were stocked high with his writings. Hoxha died at the age of 76. He was the

longest-lasting non-hereditary leader in the world, having been in power consistently since the country's liberation in November 1944. He had outdistanced Stalin, Mao and even Tito.

But now, it all has changed in Albania as the people have spoken in large rallies in the street. These are the changes: • Earlier last year, Ramiz Alis, who succeeded Hoxha, began opening up the country to the outside world and introducing cautious human rights and economic reforms. In July, the government allowed 4,000 young Albanians to leave after they stormed foreign missions in an unprecedented show of discontent. People are still leaving on a daily basis, mainly by sea to Italy.

• Religion is no longer outlawed and a few churches are already open again for worship. • Elections are coming up. • Diplomatic relations have been established with their greatest enemy, the United States.

Mother Theresa, Albania's most famous Christian, once said, "I pray for the Albanian people and the leadership of Albania every day; that they find God and also peace. I also pray for the underground church who are not afraid, and for all who suffer for their faith."

Dan Wooding is a British journalist now living in Southern California. He is the founder and International Director of ASSIST.

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Social comment

Picky, picky? Yes, indeed!

Walter Wangerin Jr.

There's a cigarette butt in the urinal. Saddest, wettest, loosest, shreddingest cigarette butt I ever hope to see. But sadder than that cigarette is the poor soul who has to pull it out again. I know that poor soul. I call her by name. She has children and tired feet and bills and a blessed capacity for friendship. The custodian here at the Holiday Inn is my friend.

But saddest of all, I think, is the impoverished soul who flicked the cigarette there in the first place. This man is benighted. He cannot see — or he doesn't care to see — that at the end of even his slightest act there always stands another human being, one whom he shall scorn or love by how he performs that act.

I wonder whether this contemptuous flicker of cigarettes can claim truly to love others. He didn't love my friend. He caused my friend a wholly unnecessary misery. He didn't have to know her to suppose that she existed and that her existence was troubled by his carelessness.

This may be the acid test of a genuine love: How do we love the ones we may never meet, who can neither punish nor reward us? True love arises from myself alone, unqualified and free. Is it true love, then — or a compromised love — when some threat drives me to it, or some payoff persuades me? A goodness given for a goodness gotten is a business deal. No blame in that. No love, either.

At the end of our least act, still affected by that act (the world, in fact, is shaped by such acts) stands another human. Always. And that human was made in the image of God.

So then: How do we love God? Answer that by asking: How do we love our neighbour. And answer that by asking: With what love do we perform the little actions for the little, invisible people? It is with these that the Christ identifies, isn't it? — the least of his sisters and brothers.

When you lean on the car horn, you may destroy your neighbour's peace for the rest of the day. But she was made in the image of God.

When you neglect to signal a left-hand turn, you neglect the driver behind you, who might

have gone forward in the right lane, had he known of your intention. All must wait for the oncoming traffic now — you, that driver and God as well. Or did you think God was in your car only?

When, for sloth, you miss a promised appointment, you hold in contempt the time of the person to whom you made the promise. The time of God, in fact, and the trust of God and the plans that God had made that day for this particular person, whose success was meant to further the success of heaven — for this was his messenger.

Laugh once at a "nigger" joke and you have laughed at the skin of the Son of God, who chose to come enfleshed.

O man, when you speak of your wife as a fool, you shoot out the lip at your Saviour. Do you not yet know that the Redeemer approaches you in your spouse? Would you curse her then? Man, you curse yourself. You cut yourself off.

If, by loud sighs and significant looks and angry gestures, you declare your impatience with the old man ahead of you in the grocery line — counting his money too slowly, trembling his food stamps, stinking — you have lost patience with Elisha, the prophet of God.

Complain about the children in your neighbourhood, whose noise unnerves you — or about your own children, whose energy leaves you angry and exhausted — and you have complained about those whom Jesus suffered into his presence, saying, "Of such is the kingdom of God."

And what of your father and mother when they descend into their dotage? (Teenagers often suspect that their parents have already entered the *fuddy* stage, prelude to *duddy*, the worse of the two). If you despise them because of your vaster knowledge, your greater experience, your more contemporary ethic, you despise the instruments by which the Creator created *you*. Can you risk chopping the tree of which you are the fruit?

And would you assume that the only way to rate an employee is by her efficiency? So then, you would cancel the rest of this human by the stroke of your executive pen? But

"cancel" means "kill" in affairs of the spirit.

Do you recognize that your mood at work is air to the others there, which is life or death eight hours a day — their breath or else their suffocation? What words do you choose with your colleagues?

So: Toss your fast-food wrappers on the highway. Toss beer cans in the river. Toss trash — the detritus of your burned-out desires, the souls you use and lose — wherever others don't see you. Toss cigarette butts in the urinal,

and you have made my dear friend miserable one more time, and she is the least of these, the sister of Christ.

And shall you rise in church, then, protesting your love of the Lord?

But we may be more accurately represented by the unconscious, habitual act than by the acts we plan and pay for. In the former our truer nature dwells, and by it is made most manifest. Our love of the Lord is *first* proclaimed by our care for the weak and the faceless, those who lack the authority to demand our service but who

receive best benefit from it.

I am not writing of democracy, an effort at the political equality of all individuals. I am writing rather of Christianity, the elevation of the other for the sake of the God who made her and who loves her.

I am writing of love.

At the end of *every* act there stands the Master — cleaning urinals.

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Count Yourself In June 4th



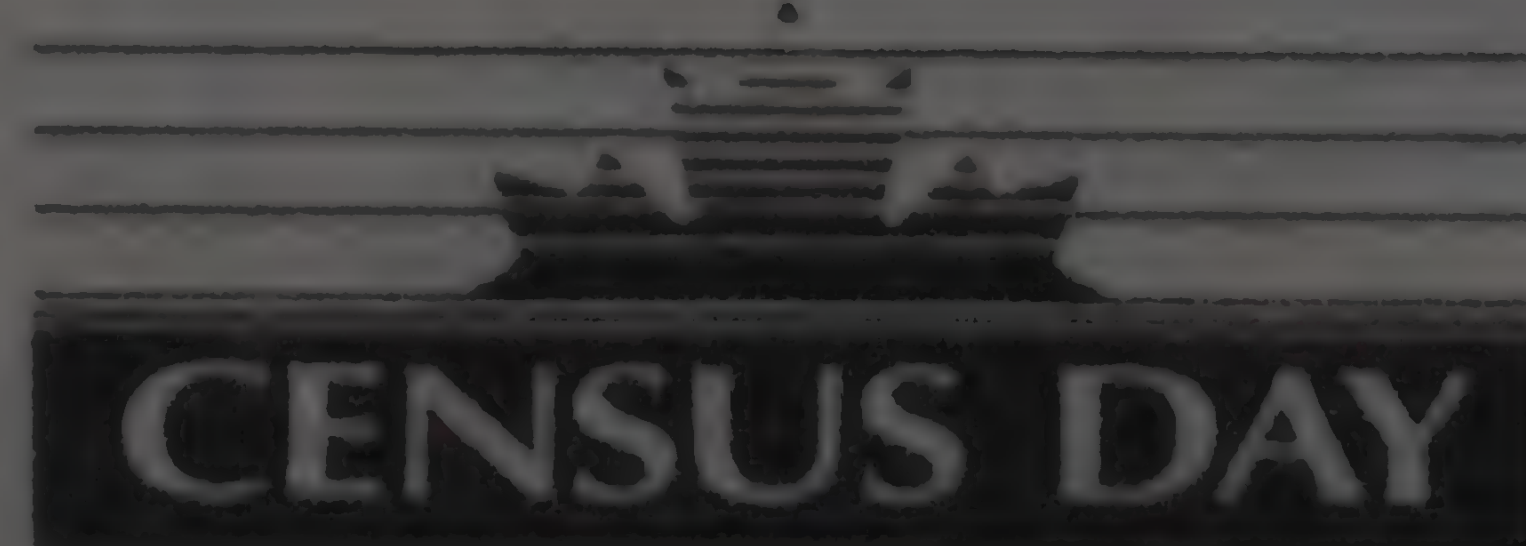
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Church in Canada

United Church congregations swell ranks of Reformed Church

John Stapert

The Reformed Church (RCA) is growing in Canada. At the end of 1988, the RCA classes of Ontario and Cascades counted 30 congregations in Canada. Since then, six congregations in British Columbia, one in Alberta, and half a dozen in Ontario have moved into the RCA from the United Church of Canada (UCC). That's more than a 40 per cent growth rate from transfer congregations alone, and there are indications that the transfers could number 20 congregations by the close of this year.

Dr. Jonathan Gerstner, executive secretary of the Council of the Reformed Church in Canada, tells the growth story enthusiastically. In less than two years on the job, Gerstner has witnessed "a transformation of confidence," as he calls it, in the whole Reformed Church in Canada.

The UCC's internal distress has yielded these numerical and attitudinal gains for the Reformed Church. Stressful differences in the UCC over biblical interpretation and style of church life were topped in the late 1980s by a sharp conflict over homosexuality. When a conservative UCC group lost that battle, an exodus from the UCC began, and about half of the departing congregations are moving toward the RCA.

Even as Gerstner was being interviewed two years ago for his present position, he visited with pastors from the United Church of Canada in Vancouver, British Columbia, who were distressed about their denomination and who were interested in transferring into the RCA. "To have leaders [from the UCC] come to us and say that the RCA has something to offer has transformed our thinking about ourselves," Gerstner explains.

Last summer, Ontario Classis appointed an affiliation task force, a subcommittee of the classis' executive committee, to "interview spiritual refugees," as committee chairperson Peter Humby of Grimsby, Ontario, describes it. Humby, a layperson, is a longtime RCA member. For RCA ordination purposes, his committee spends two to two-and-a-half hours interviewing each incoming UCC pastor in areas of theology, personal Christian life, ordination and call to the ministry. "We've spent two or three Saturdays from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. on this committee," says Humby. "The theology examination is based on the [UCC's] Articles of Union, because they're familiar with that," Humby explains.

Personal and professional risk

By late March this year, seven pastors had been accepted from the UCC into Ontario Classis. Of those, five are in organizing, leadership

roles in congregations; two are retired but active.

Migrating as a minister from the United Church of Canada to any other denomination is difficult. The UCC has no provision for transferring a minister out, although it does have a procedure for transferring them in. Consequently, ministers who have indicated their intention to leave the UCC for the RCA have been placed on the "discontinued service list," the UCC's way of suspending their ordinations. Humby has witnessed the personal and professional risk taken by these pastors. "It's quite a gamble they're taking," he says. "They have to give up their homes when they leave the United Church."

Humby is impressed by the calibre of ministers whom his committee has interviewed. "It's top people we're getting — doctors of theology and presbytery officers," he says. Gerstner echoes the sentiment. He points to former members of presbytery executive committees, to a former UCC representative to the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, and to a former UCC denominational executive.

Nor do congregations find it easy to shift denominations. Some member families have 150-year roots in their congregations. And under UCC polity, the church property belongs to the denomination; its ownership cannot be taken by the departing congregation. The congregations that have followed their ministers into the RCA are temporarily meeting in community buildings or schools.

Challenging the establishment

An increasingly central figure in the recent denominational migration of ministers and churches has been Rev. Gordon Ross, a former UCC minister. Before entering the RCA last fall, Ross was director of the Community of Concern (COC), formed in 1988 as an opposition group within the UCC. In his role as head of COC, Ross challenged the UCC's stand on homosexuality and what he perceives as a "Theological shift from core Christianity" in the UCC. In early 1990, the conflict between Ross and the UCC escalated into a \$1 million lawsuit that Ross filed against UCC general secretary the Rev. Howie Mills.

In the lawsuit, Ross claimed that Mills libeled the COC in a letter distributed to the United Church's executive committee. The letter contained a characterization of the COC as "dangerous and seemingly demonic or possessed." The lawsuit was dropped in May 1990, prior to the UCC's biennial general council (equivalent to the RCA's general synod) meeting. Mills withdrew his "regrettable statement" and Ross withdrew his "regrettable libel suit."



Rev. Gordon Ross (kneeling) at the service of installation in the Emmanuel Reformed Church of Whitby, Ont.

All sides deny that practising homosexuality is the real issue of contention.

"Homosexuality is to the UCC's problems as indulgences were to the Reformation," says Ross. And a lifetime UCC member described homosexuality as "the trigger; but the bullet was already there, loaded with powder, ready to fire."

Gerstner sees the lordship of Christ as the essential issue. Along with that, there are other questions: Is Scripture the Word of God? and does Scripture have a guiding role for the church today? Ross complains that in the UCC "we're left with a church that is increasingly able to witness to Jesus as example, not to Jesus as victor, as deliverer. The reality of sin, of the Fall, is missing."

Ross left for the RCA in late 1990, and Gerstner selected him as program secretary for church development in the RCA's Emerging Regional Synod of Canada. An anonymous donor has provided funds for Ross's RCA temporary employment. For Gerstner, Ross's availability and arrival have been serendipitous. The emerging synod needs staff, and Ross is knowledgeable about the UCC denomination from which most of the RCA growth is

coming.

All this is experienced with some distress among executives of the United Church of Canada. General secretary Howie Mills says that Gerstner and Ross "have been visiting UCC congregations in a way that feels very much like sheep-stealing." And while Ross points to the large majority of UCC members (at least 68 per cent according to a United Church Observer survey) who oppose the ordination of homosexuals, Mills believes that Ross speaks for very few in the church.

Practise prophetic ecumenism

Hal Lewellan, the UCC's chief ecumenical officer, refers to correspondence from Gerstner as "ecumenically extremely insensitive."

Lewellan is also disturbed by the recent appointment of Ross as a Reformed Church representative to the Canadian Council of Churches. "It was careless, in light of the correspondence that's gone on," says Lewellan.

Gerstner and Ross claim to take ecumenical relations seriously, but they may be speaking of something different from that meant by Mills and Lewellan. Gerstner says the Emerging Synod of Canada will practise "prophetic ecumenism." Both Ross and Gerstner describe the present councils of churches as "good-old-boys networks" in which biblical fidelity has become secondary to interpersonal rapport.

Enormous opportunity

Rev. Douglas Fromm, RCA associate for ecumenical relations, commented, "There definitely has been some fallout from the way things have been handled. There is some concern on the part of the Presbyterian Church of Canada about the RCA's ecumenical role in Canada."

Fromm indicated that the RCA's Commission on Christian Unity is monitoring the developments. It has communicated to the Council of the Reformed Church in Canada its concerns about the

sensitivity of Gordon Ross's appointment to the Canadian Council of Churches. Fromm added, "I am concerned that when we speak about our ecumenical commitment we match it with behaviour that builds good relationships, not with behaviour that could be perceived as adversarial."

Among Gerstner's dreams for the RCA in Canada is the full emergence of a Canadian regional synod, the multiplication of classes, and more staff. Ross's present position is temporary, but Gerstner will need staff help if the emerging synod grows, especially considering the large geographic space in Canada between the Ontario cluster of churches and those in the Far West.

Financial implications arise, too. Gerstner hopes that RCA congregations in the United States will see "what an enormous opportunity this is for us." Since the newly arriving congregations have people and pastors but not buildings, funds will be needed for church construction.

Theologically, Gerstner sees the addition of conservative UCC congregations as an opportunity to help the RCA clarify its thinking about the core issues of the Christian faith. "The central question of our time is the question of Jesus Christ," says Gerstner, quoting the British evangelical writer John R.W. Stott. Gerstner wants the RCA to weigh its "gospel commitments" against the "ecumenical old boys' league."

At least part of the dream is realistic. The Classis of Cascades, which now includes congregations on both sides of the U.S.-Canada border, has a 1993 target date for splitting into three classes. Two of the new classes will be in Canada; the third will consist of the Cascades churches on the U.S. side of the border. By that time, if Ontario Classis receives additional UCC congregations, it may be in a position to subdivide. Perhaps 1993 will also be the occasion for the RCA's General Synod to constitute fully the Synod of Canada. "The 1993 General Synod will meet in Vancouver," Gerstner observes wistfully, noting what a fine occasion for celebration that might be.

Reprinted with permission from The Church Herald, May 1991. John Stapert is editor of The Church Herald, the monthly magazine of the Reformed Church in America.

Abortion getting hard to find says abortion advocacy group

WASHINGTON, D.C. (EP) — Access to abortion in the United States, broadly expanded by the U.S. Supreme Court in 1973, is now being sharply limited, not by the government, but by a shortage

of doctors, clinics, and hospitals willing to perform the procedure.

According to a study by the Alan Guttmacher Institute, a research organization associated with Planned

Parenthood, the number of abortion providers peaked in 1982, and has steadily declined since then.

"American women will lose the right to abortion, and the Supreme Court won't be the

cause of it," states Barbara Radford of the National Abortion Federation (NAF). According to an NAF report released April 30, the decline is due to pro-life activism, declining abortion training in medical schools, and professional disapproval of abortionists.

That's just fine with the National Right to Life Committee's (NRLC) Nancy Myers, who said, "There should be and is a personal and professional stigma attached to people who make a living tearing unborn children's limbs apart."

At present, 83 per cent of American counties are free of doctors who perform abortions. In Delaware and Hawaii, no doctors perform abortions. In California, abortion is available in just 31 per cent of all counties, and in New York the figure drops to 23 per cent. Though most OB-GYN (obstetrics-gynecology) specialists say they support abortion in certain situations, only about one in three will perform abortions; only about two per cent do more than 25 a month.

In its coverage of the

shortage, *USA Today* featured Dr. Joseph Randall of Atlanta, who performed an estimated 32,000 abortions over a nine-year period. When developments in ultrasound made it possible for Randall to see fetal development firsthand, he began to question the morality of abortion. He stopped doing abortions in 1983 when he became convinced "there were full-fledged human beings in there."

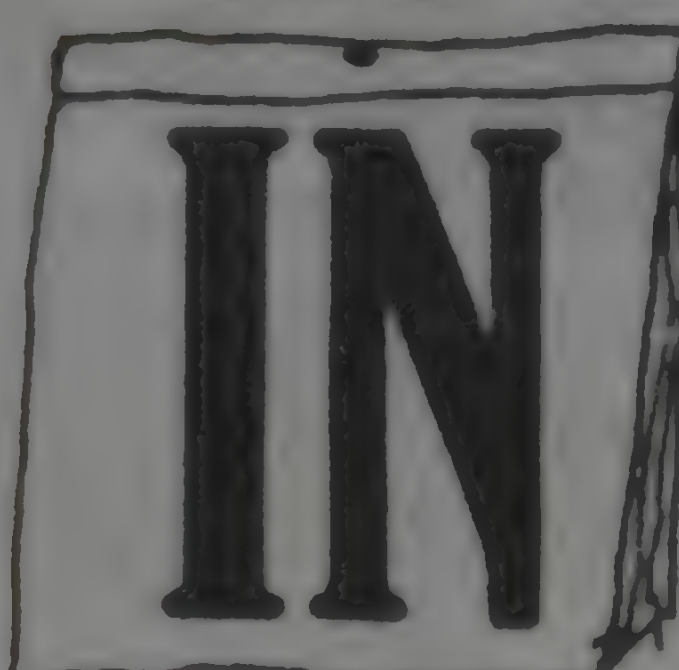
The NRLC's Myers says she hopes more doctors will stop doing abortions. "Doctors know every abortion stops a beating heart," she explained.

A study released by the Alan Guttmacher Institute and U.S. Center for Disease Control found a drop in the overall abortion rate from 1980 to 1987. According to the study, 29 out of every 1000 women had an abortion in 1987, down six per cent from 1980. However, the study found an 18 per cent increase in abortions among girls younger than 15, and an 11 per cent increase in the abortion rate for minority girls ages 15 to 19. The highest rate was for girls ages 18 and 19, at 62 per 1,000 women.



Photo: David Van Dyke

Peter and Marja are



Dear P & M:

We have been married about five years and have two children. We are definitely best friends, but in the bedroom no sparks fly. They used to, but lately I'm too tired, and even when rested, I just feel nothing. Medically nothing is wrong so could it be just motherhood getting in the way?

Could you also comment on something else? I've noticed that a couple is looked down on if they wait a few years to start a family. Later people start counting between children. Two years in between seems to be ideal; if it's any longer they start to look at your stomach. You're considered strange if you want to stop after two children. Along the way you hear unfeeling comments like: "So, when's your next one?"

How does one get across the idea that a small family can and is just as precious and wonderful as a large family? And how do you handle unfeeling remarks?

Dear Hectic Mom:

Diminished sexual desire is more common than many of us would think. Healthy young couples are often subjected to numerous stress factors that inhibit arousal and reduce their interest in lovemaking.

The most frequently mentioned causes for diminished desire are tiredness, anger, boredom and fear of pregnancy.

Your two children are at an age where they need a lot of your attention. At the end of the day there can't be much energy left for the kind of exciting lovemaking that you used to enjoy. As you know, kids have a way of needing Mom or Dad in the evening or night as well. Don't you find that part of you is always on the alert for the sound of kids? Frankly, those wonderful children can really drain sexual desire!

Anger also shuts down sexual interest. If you are a stay-at-home mom, you may feel some resentment about your parental responsibilities. Perhaps you envy your husband's freedom to go out and work. If he works long days, and you do most of the parenting, frustration may also build. Conflict with parents, in-laws, church, friends, work, etc., can also contribute to diminished desire.

Boredom saps sexual interest, too. We recommend continued education in the area of sexuality and suggest that you visit the library or bookstore and do some reading. Since you are best friends, you should feel safe enough together to experiment with the different techniques and positions that marriage manuals suggest.

We also recommend that you get a babysitter and go out on a real date at least once a month. Twice a year book a hotel with a pool and sauna and spend at least 24 hours, if not a whole weekend, with just the two of you. On a weekly

basis, while the children are this young, have your own candlelit dinner as a couple after you've tucked them into bed. Make it a habit to turn the TV off earlier and go to bed at the same time. You will be amazed at the way these romantic interludes can revitalize your passion and make the sparks fly again.

Fear of pregnancy can also be an inhibiting factor. Two pregnancies in the first five years of marriage have caused you to directly link sex and childbirth. Your church community's expectation that you should have more children hasn't helped, either.

You and your husband need to make a decision about family size. We wonder whether the two of you have a difference of opinion here. In the meantime, we trust that you are taking precautions which minimize the possibility of becoming pregnant.

As far as people's comments are concerned, please don't feel that you have to explain anything to anyone. Your decision about family size is between you, your husband and the Lord. Say less, not more. Answer with an enigmatic smile that leaves people wondering what the secret is to your happy marriage. If you're really pressed for an answer, just say: "We're into quality, not quantity!" And let them see that mysterious smile again.

Initiate a discussion with your husband by sharing this column with him. Choose one of the books recommended below, or another title that catches your interest, and read it together in bed. Sooner or later something exciting is bound to happen.

Recommended reading:

Christian bookstore:

The Gift of Sex: A Guide to Sexual Fulfillment, by Clifford and Joyce Penner
A Gift for All Ages: A Family Handbook on Sexuality, by Clifford and Joyce Penner
The Act of Marriage, by Tim LaHay
Sex for Christians, by Lewis Smedes

Library:

The First Year of Marriage, by Miriam Arond and Samuel Parker
Super Marital Sex: Loving for Life, by Paul Pearsall
Not Tonight, Dear: How to Reawaken Sexual Desire, by Anthony Pietropinto and Jacqueline Simenauer
Sexual Intimacy: Love and Play, by Andrew Greeley

Write to: P & M
 c/o Calvinist Contact
 4-261 Martindale Rd.
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Peter and Marja Nieborg are a pastor and wife team living in St. Catharines, Ont. They are assisted by an advisory panel consisting of: Sam De Silva, Ineke Brimacombe-Purves, Tim Zest, Marian Van Til and Bert Wuytack.

The *most* news on the Netherlands and the Dutch in Canada and the USA *the Windmill*

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If you wish a photo included, send us the original.</p> <p>d) Calvinist Contact will not be responsible for any errors due to handwritten or phoned-in advertisements.</p> <p>e) The rate shown above for classifieds covers any length up to six column inches. Calvinist Contact reserves the right to charge for additional column inches at the rate of \$13.50 per column inch (GST inclusive).</p> <p>NEWLYWEDS</p> <p>Non-subscribing newlyweds whose wedding announcement with their future address appears in Calvinist Contact will receive a letter offering a first-year subscription for only \$20.00 (GST inclusive)! To facilitate matters, we encourage those who request and pay for the wedding announcement to enclose \$20.00 and the couple's future address.</p> <p>Calvinist Contact Publishing Ltd. 4-261 Martindale Rd. St. Catharines, ON L2W 1A1 Phone: (416) 682-8311 Fax: (416) 682-8313</p>	<p>KRONEMEYER: Happy birthday</p> <p>JOHANNA KRONEMEYER (former Mrs. Verschoor)</p> <p>Congratulations on your 80th birthday! We hope the Lord will be with you and keep you in good health. With love from all your children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren.</p> <p>We hope to celebrate with an open house on Tuesday, June 4, 1991, from 2 - 4 p.m. at Wellington Christian Senior Citizens Home, 1415 Upper Wellington St., Hamilton, Ont.</p>	<p>1966 June 11 1991</p> <p>With joy and thanksgiving to God, we hope to celebrate the 25th wedding anniversary of our parents,</p> <p>RALPH and ANNE KOOPS (nee Visbeek)</p> <p>We pray that God may continue to bless and keep you in the years to come.</p> <p>Congratulations from your children: Jeff & Christina Boer (girlfriend) Randall Marsha Joel</p> <p>To celebrate this special occasion there will be an open house on Saturday, June 22, 1991, from 2-5 p.m. at Maranatha Chr. Ref. Church, 94 Elgin St. S., Cambridge, Ont.</p> <p>Home address: 99 Highman Ave., Cambridge, ON N1R 3M2</p>	<p>GEORGETOWN, Ont.: Georgetown District Chr. School. Because of increased enrolment in Kindergarten, we have a possible opening for a 60 per cent teacher aid with E.C.E. training. For information or application please contact Traena Sybersma Principal, R.R. #1, Georgetown, ON L7G 4S4 or phone: (416) 877-4221.</p> <p>HOUSTON, B.C.: Houston Christian School, located in the beautiful Bulkley Valley of north central B.C. has 3 Elementary teaching positions open. Please address all inquiries to Mr. Doyle Smiens, Principal, Box 237, Houston, B.C. Phone (604) 845-7736.</p> <p>RENFREW, ONT.: Renfrew District Christian School is currently seeking a full-time teacher. The position involves a multi-grade setting from Grades 4-8. If you aspire towards a Christian teaching environment, we offer a competitive salary and benefit package. Send resume to: Renfrew District Chr. School, attention: Secretary, Box 818, Renfrew, ON K7V 4H2</p> <p>TERRACE, B.C.: Centennial Christian School is accepting applications for a Kindergarten position for the 1991-92 school year. Direct inquiries to: Mr. Frank Voogd, 3608 Sparks St., Terrace, BC V8G 2A5; Phone: (604) 635-6173</p>	<p>CLINTON, Ont.: 18 year old student at LDCSS (graduating this June). I have experience in dairy, poultry (egg), and other odds and ends jobs (eg: bailing, mowing grass, etc.). I would prefer to work on a poultry farm, but am willing to try pretty well anything. Since you're near the phone, why not just give me a call at 1-(519) 482-5852, ask for John.</p> <p>Grimsby, Ont.: DORDT COLLEGE student (3rd year English major, Journalism) is looking for a job during the summer months. Many years of experience in greenhouse and nursery work, but prefers study related work. Dirk B. Schouten (416) 945-5335.</p> <p>GUELPH, Ont.: Looking for work in construction, but willing to do other work. Experience in framing, social work, greenhouse and machine shop work. Call Brent at (519) 836-3298.</p> <p>INDIAN RIVER, Ont.: I am a university student looking for summer employment in office work, baby-sitting, or housework. If you have any work for me, please call Angela at (705) 295-6942.</p> <p>LINDSAY, Ont.: 20-year-old male university student would like summer work as a lifeguard and/or swim instructor (all levels). My qualifications include many RLS SC levels such as instructor, lifesaver, boat rescue, water-safety instructor and bronze bar. I have three years experience, am available May 1, and you can contact me, Claude, at (705) 328-0608.</p> <p>MORRISBURG, Ont.: Reformed Bible College student (3rd year). I am working towards my Bachelor of Religious Education in Missions degree with a minor in social work. I am looking for a job for the summer months which is social work related. Amy Van Veen, R.R. #1, Morrisburg, ON K0C 1X0; Phone: (613) 543-2097.</p>	
	<p>Marriages</p> <p>KATERBERG-PRONK: Henk and Roelie Katerberg are pleased to announce the marriage of their daughter,</p> <p>JOANNE WILMA to MARTE STEPHEN</p> <p>son of Martin and Corrie Pronk of Harrison, Ont.</p> <p>This ceremony will take place, D.V., on Saturday, June 8, 1991, at 2 p.m. in the Chr. Ref. Church of Palmerston, Ont.</p> <p>As family we wish you God's blessing and also give you our continued support as you go on life's pathway together.</p> <p>Future address: R.R. #3, Palmerston, ON N0G 2P0</p> <p>ROUKEMA-GRITTER: Dr. and Mrs. Job and Didy Roukema of Hamilton, Ont., and Rev. and Mrs. Evert and Jenny Gritter of Cobourg, Ont., are happy to announce the marriage of their children,</p> <p>HEATHER KRISTINA and ROY ANTHONY</p> <p>The wedding will take place, D.V., on Saturday, June 15, 1991, at 3 p.m., in the Ancaster Chr. Ref. Church, 70 Highway 53 East, Ancaster, Ont., Rev. L.H. Batterink and Rev. E. Gritter officiating.</p> <p>Heather and Roy will move to Edmonton, Alta.</p> <p>Temporary correspondence address: 304 Stonechurch Rd. West, Hamilton, ON L9B 1A4</p>	<p>s'-Gravenhage Harrison</p> <p>1951 June 13 1991</p> <p>"Isaac built an altar there and called on the name of the Lord. There he pitched his tent, and there his servants dug a well" (Gen. 28:25). With praise and thanksgiving to our God, we hope to celebrate the 40th wedding anniversary of our parents and grandparents,</p> <p>MARTINUS (Martin) and CORNELIA (Corry) BEEN (nee Waasdorp)</p> <p>It is our hope and prayer that God will continue to bless you and keep you in his care in years to come.</p> <p>With love from: Al & Jane Been — London, Ont. Derrick, Adrian</p> <p>You are invited to celebrate this joyous occasion at an open house, D.V., June 13, 1991, from 2-4 p.m., at their home. Best wishes only please.</p> <p>Home address: 40 Marklane St., Box 641, Harrison, ON N0G 1Z0</p> <p>Nieuwe Pekela Cookstown</p> <p>1946 June 4 1991</p> <p>In the words of Psalm 100, we would like to announce with gratitude the occasion of the 45th wedding anniversary of our mom and dad, grandma and grandpa,</p> <p>HENRY and GAIL HORLINGS</p> <p>"For the Lord is good; his lovingkindness shall continue forever, his faithfulness throughout all generations."</p> <p>Henry & Judy Lunshof — Smithville, Ont.</p> <p>Ben, Chris, Tammy Harry & Joan Horlings — Bradford, Ont.</p> <p>Sarah, Jonathan, Matthew Terry & Anita Horlings — Bradford, Ont.</p> <p>Jacob, Timothy, Patrick Home address: R.R. #3, Cookstown, ON L0L 1L0</p>		<p>Personal</p> <p>Christian lady (widow), happy personality, outgoing, likes to travel, enjoys home life, located in Ontario, would like to meet Christian gentleman, age 68-75 for companionship and gezelligheid. Write to File #2564, c/o Calvinist Contact, 4-261 Martindale Rd., St. Catharines, ON L2W 1A1</p>	
	<p>Thanks</p> <p>KATERBERG: We would like to say "Thank You" to our family and friends for the many cards, letters, gifts and well wishes received as we celebrated our 40th wedding anniversary. Thank you for making our day so very special! William and Femmy Katerberg R.R. #2, Alma, Ont.</p>		<p>Help Wanted</p> <p>Church administrator, half-time position. For detailed job description contact Forestview Community Church, 4-6 Ontario St., Grimsby, ON L3M 3G9, Tel.: (416) 945-9529.</p>		
	<p>Birth</p>  <p>SCHUURMAN: "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above" (James 1:17). Clarence and Pauline (nee Prins) are pleased to announce the birth of our third child, a beautiful boy.</p> <p>JOEL RAYMOND</p> <p>was born on April 30, 1991, at 1:03 a.m. weighing 10 lbs., 1 oz. Joel is a little brother for Nicholas and Janine. Sharing our joy and happiness are grandparents Dirk and Shirley Schuurman of Brownsville and James and Carol Prins of Dundas.</p> <p>Home address: R.R. #3, Tillsonburg, ON N4G 4G8</p>	<p>Anniversaries</p> <p>1956 June 8 1991</p> <p>With joy and thanksgiving to our Lord, we are happy to announce the 35th wedding anniversary of our parents and grandparents,</p> <p>RAY and SIEN KIELSTRA (nee Hoogstra)</p> <p>May God bless you both with many more happy years together. Love and congratulations from your children and grandchildren.</p> <p>Happy anniversary Dad and Mom, Pake and Oma, from: Clare & Rose Raymond, Natalie Janie & Jake Joey, Jamie, Johnny, Jeffrey Peter & Judy David, Brian, Wendy Home address: 230 Sunset Drive, St Thomas, ON N5R 3C3</p>	<p>Real Estate</p> <p>Trailer park, 100-site, 30 acres, 10 miles to church and school. For more information, call (416) 986-4515.</p> <p>ADA REALTY LTD. 6012 Ada Blvd. Edmonton, AB T5W 4N9 (403) 471-1814 Sid Vandermeulen</p> <p>Contact us first when you think of moving to Edmonton and district.</p> <p>Het vertrouwde adres.</p>	<p>Summer Job Market</p> <p>Acton, Ont.: Experience in sales of masonry products. Third year marketing student. 21-years old. Would like to work in sales field, but will take anything for the summer. Call: Anthony Looyenga at (519) 853-0758.</p> <p>Bowmanville, Ont.: Athletic, country girl going into Grade 11. Has experience on apple, sheep and fruit & veg. farms. Wouldn't mind trying some sort of camp-counselling, assistant counselling, etc. But willing to do almost anything! Contact: Gena Jaspers-Fayer, R.R. #4 (3326) Bragg Rd., Bowmanville, ON L1C 3K5 (416) 623-2634.</p> <p>Bowmanville, Ont.: 16-year-old, Grade 11 male looking for work in farming or construction during the summer months. Have experience in bricklaying (labourer) and farmwork. Also have driver's licence. Richard Wessels, R.R. #4, Bowmanville, ON L1C 3K5. Phone: (416) 623-8521.</p>	<p>PETERBOROUGH, Ont.: Hi, I'm 17 years old and attend Quinte Christian High School. I would like to use my summer to broaden my work experience (anywhere in Ontario), which already includes dairy farming, babysitting, camp kitchen, and nursing home. My social activities include Young People's and 4-H. For enthusiastic help call Janice at (705) 696-2169.</p> <p>ST. CATHARINES, Ont.: McMaster student is eager to find summer employment. Prefer office work (computer, etc.) but I'm open to doing other things as well. Call Dave at (416) 935-4026.</p> <p>TORONTO, Ont.: Second-year female Redeemer student, 19 years old, seeks employment in Toronto area. Experienced with young children and infants, minor cooking, housekeeping and gardening, but eager and willing to learn new skills. Call Liesje at (416) 648-2131, ext. 320, or, after April 26, at (416) 223-8380.</p> <p>VANCOUVER, B.C.: I am a 24 year old social work student (3rd year) seeking employment in the social services in the Greater Vancouver area. I have experience working with the mentally disabled, elderly and troubled youth. Call Mary-Anne at (604) 434-8776.</p>

Summer Job Market

WATERLOO, Ont.: 20-year-old Guelph University student (English, second year) seeks summer job in the **Kitchener/Waterloo** or **Toronto** area. Would like to work in study-related field but is willing to do just about anything. Has experience as camp counsellor, swimming instructor and caring for children. Call Trixie at (519) 725-4581.

Vacation


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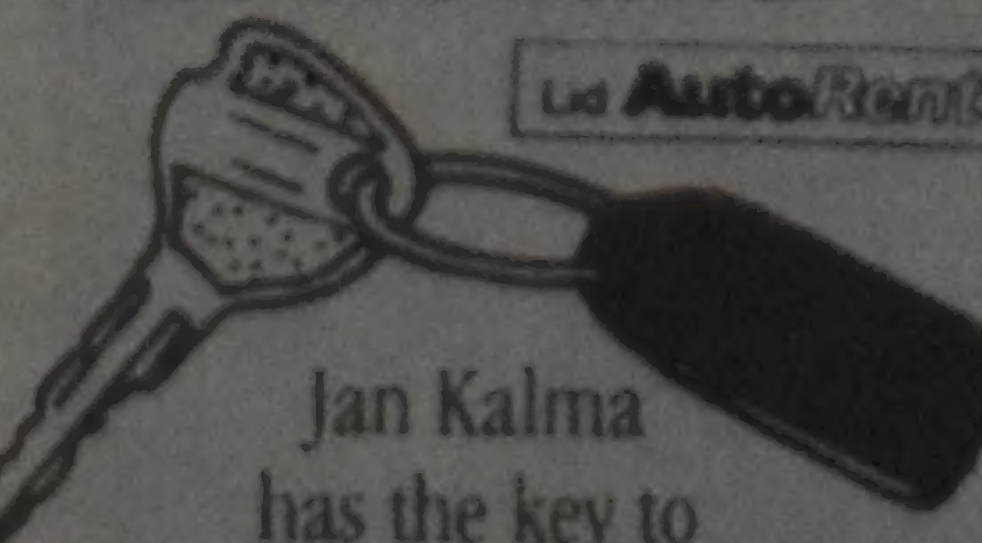


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Toronto office:
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31 Wagon Trailway
Willowdale, ON M2J 4V4

Miscellaneous

Want to rent a car while in Holland?




Jan Kalma has the key to all forms of car rentals.

Will deliver car to Amsterdam airport if desired.

jan kalma
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The Netherlands — Tel. (31) 5120-15199
Fax (31) 5120-32324

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GEERTSMA CONSTRUCTION LTD.
P.O. BOX 1226, BELLEVILLE, ONTARIO K8N 5E9

ESTIMATOR wanted for bidding on ICI Design Build, General Contract projects ranging up to 5M, with additional skills in project management, design and drafting. Please forward resume in confidence to Andy Geertsma.

Help Wanted

PART-TIME YOUTH WORKER

is being sought by the **Delta First Ladner CRC**. Delta is a rapidly expanding suburb of Vancouver, B.C. Church profiles and further information on this exciting/challenging new position available. Enquiries/resumes should be directed to:

John Bandstra (604) 946-6231

Help Wanted

SEEKING A PASTOR

The congregation of the **Penticton CRC** is seeking a pastor for its 34 families. Penticton is located in the Okanagan Valley of British Columbia. Church and community profiles are available upon request. Please send enquiries and resumes to search committee chairman:

John Antonides, 150 Edmonton Ave., Penticton, B.C. Canada, V2A 2G8
Phone: (604) 492-8564

Help Wanted

SEEKING A PASTOR

The **Christian Reformed Church of St. Albert, Alta.**, a congregation of 60 families, will be vacant at the end of June 1991. We are seeking a **new pastor** to lead us in worship and congregational life. A church profile is available upon request.

For information contact:
Bud Brink (403) 458-3091, or
Albert Stol
57 Springfield Cr.
St. Albert, AB T8N 0J9
Phone: (403) 458-6578

Vacation

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Vacation

Events

Upcoming event

Plan now to attend the third annual worship conference with the theme:

"Praise and Prayer"

September 20 and 21, 1991, at Zion Chr. Ref. Church in Oshawa, Ont.

Watch for more details
For more information call (416) 436-3255

Events

Analysis: Creation Science Report CRC Synod 1991

Place of Meeting: Bethel CRC, London, Ont.

Speaker: **Rev. Jerry Van Dyk**
Date: June 14, 1991, at 8:00 p.m.

Sponsored by Concerned Members of the CRC of Classis Chatham
For information call (519) 269-3939. Everyone Welcome!

Help Wanted

HIGHPOINT ENGINEERING LTD.

of Midland, Ontario, requests applications for the following positions:

SENIOR MUNICIPAL ENGINEER

Must have 8 - 10 years of experience in the design and project management of municipal engineering projects for both the private and public sector. Experience in stormwater management techniques also required.

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Please forward resumes in confidence to:

HIGHPOINT ENGINEERING LTD.
P.O. Box 697
Midland, Ontario L4R 4P4
Attention: Mr. T. (Sid) Tjeerdsma, P. Eng. President
FAX: 705-527-6006

Help Wanted

PICNIC

Dutch Marine Veterans

will hold their yearly "herhalingsoefening" on **June 15, 1991**, at the "**Hol-Fin Stables**" of the Lock family on **1770 Forbrock Rd., Pickering, Ont.**
(Forbrock Rd. runs east off Brock Rd., just north of the CPR tracks.)


"Baksgewijs" somewhere around 10 a.m.; coffee ready at 10:30 a.m. The "Hap" promises to be a continuous affair. New members together with their spouses are welcome to attend!

For information call:
Bas De Man (416) 277-0501 **Piet Duyn (416) 493-6958**
or **Harry Roffel (416) 646-4681**

Events

Events

It's our twelfth year!
Come to Calvin's
"vacation college"



Join Christian friends and families for a week of learning, worship, and relaxation!

WHEN?
July 8-13, 1991

FOR WHOM?
All friends of Calvin—singles, couples, families; young and old. Children's activities and baby-sitting provided.

THEME?
"I Belong...in Life and in Death to my Faithful Savior."

SEMINARS?
"Imaging God in Medical Ethics"
Dr. Hessel Bouma III, biology
"After Death, What?"
Dr. John Cooper, Seminary

MEALS AND HOUSING?
All provided by the college.

OTHER PROGRAMS?
"Art Camps" for kids in grades 2-12; "Photography Camp" for kids in grades 7-12; and "Basketball Camp" for junior high girls.

FREE TIME?
All afternoons. Enjoy Calvin's facilities and the attractions of Grand Rapids and western Michigan. An exciting social activity is planned for each evening.

COST?
\$200 each adult; \$100 each child ten and over; \$50 each child five through nine; \$30 each child under five; suite accommodates five persons—no extra charge for additional rooms. Add 10% to final cost if paying in Canadian funds.

NOT STAYING ON CAMPUS?
\$100 fee includes everything but room and board; \$30 for child care for the week.

CALVIN ALUMNI?
Reunions will be held on July 10, 11 and 12 for the Heritage Class and the Classes of 1941, 1951, 1966, 1971, and 1981.

Call (616) 957-8577 for Reunionfest information.

SUMMERFEST
Alumni Office—Calvin College
Grand Rapids, MI 49546
(616) 957-6142

Events

With thanks to God you are invited to celebrate in the retirement of 40 years in the ministry of

REV. JACOB KUNTZ

Dinner & Program
on June 22, 1991, at 5:30 p.m.
Woodland Christian High School
R.R. #1, Breslau, Ont.
Tickets are \$14.00 per person.

Contact: Olga & Arend Steenbeek,
92 Pinedale Dr.,
Kitchener, ON N2E 1J7
(519) 579-0082

Events

With praise and thanksgiving to God, the Board of Sarnia Christian School is pleased to recognize our principal,

MR. PETER WEENING

for 25 years of faithful service in Christian Education.

In honour of this anniversary an Open House will be held

Tuesday, June 11, 1991 at
SARNIA CHRISTIAN SCHOOL
1273 Exmouth St., Sarnia

7:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m. PROGRAM
8:30 p.m. - 9:30 p.m. OPEN HOUSE


All former students and colleagues are cordially invited to celebrate with us!

ATTENTION:

If you are considering sending us an ad via fax, please be sure to:

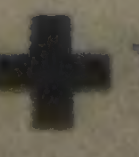
1. send printed or typed copy
2. include billing address
3. include contact person with phone number

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Calendar of Events

May 31	Serge LeClerc, street kid, drug dealer, ex-convict, and now, by the grace of God, a Christian. Hear his testimony and challenge at 8 p.m., Maranatha CRC, Cambridge, Ont. For info. call (519) 623-8151.	June 14	CCM (Kitchener Chapter) meets at 8 p.m., Faith Missionary Church, Kitchener, Ont. Speaker: Rev. J.M. Julien on the Belgic Confession.
June 1	Dedication ceremonies for new addition to Brantford Christian School, Brantford, Ont. Starts 2 p.m. Speaker: Jake Ellens.	June 15	RCBPO Hamilton Halton Chapter meets at 7:45 p.m. at the Ebenezer Can. Ref. Church. Speaker: Clarence Boonstra. For info. call (416) 524-1203.
June 2	Dutch service at the CRC, Ancaster, Ont., 3 p.m., led by Rev. Ralph Koops.	June 15	"Grunneger Picnic," at 10 a.m., Grand River Conservation Area, Rockwood, Ont.
June 3-7	"Milk & Honey Summer Festival," at Redeemer College, Ancaster, Ont. For details call (416) 648-2131.	June 19	RCBPO Fifth Annual All-Ontario Golf Tournament. For info. call (416) 524-1203.
June 4	Music for choir, organ, piano and trumpet with Paul Grimwood conducting. Concert starts at 8 p.m., Redeemer College, Ancaster, Ont. For tickets calls (416) 648-2131.	June 21-22	"Rumours of Glory: Bruce Cockburn & Christian Faith in a post-modern world." At ICS, Toronto, Ont. This seminar will be led by J. Richard Middleton and Brian J. Walsh. For registration call (416) 979-2331.
June 4-6	"Christianity and the Classics II - Beginnings," a conference at ICS, Toronto, Ont. Speakers: Wendy Helleman, Al Wolters, William Rowe and others. For registration call (416) 979-2331.	June 26	Annual picnic of "The Cypress Gardens Winter Ministry," at 10 a.m., Bronte Creek Provincial Park (take exit 109 off QEW). Bring lunch!
June 5	"De Hollandse Dag in Kingston," at 10 a.m., First CRC, Kingston, Ont. Speaker: Rev. Dirk Velt-huizen. For info. call (613) 384-2493.	July 3	"De Hollandse Dag in Mount Brydges," at 10 a.m., Caradoc Community Centre, Mount Brydges, Ont. Speaker: Rev. J. Joosse. Bring lunch!
June 7	Concert by "Acappella" (from Paris, Tennessee) at 7:30 p.m., Covenant CRC, St. Catharines, Ont. For tickets and info, call Martin Lensink (416) 937-1078 or Eileen Vanden Bogert (416) 934-4327.	July 5-6	"The People and the Book: Christian Origins and the N.T.," a conference at ICS, Toronto, Ont. Speaker NT scholar N. Thomas Wright of Oxford University. For registration call (416) 979-2331.
June 8	Mariahout-Lieshout (the Netherlands) Town Reunion, will be held at Erin, Ont. Join the festivi-ties! Call (416) 224-5211.	July 7	Dutch service at the CRC, Ancaster, Ont., 3 p.m., led by Rev. J. Kuntz.
June 12	"De Hollandse Dag in Moorefield," in the Com-munity Centre, Moorefield, Ont. Starts at 10 a.m. Speaker: Rev. J.G. Klomps.	July 12-14	40th Anniversary CRC, Wallaceburg, Ont. For dinner tickets and info. call (519) 677-4479.
June 14	CCM (Classis Chatham) meets at 8 p.m., Bethel CRC, London, Ont. Speaker: Rev. Jerry Van Dyk on "Analysis: Creation/Science Report CRC Synod 1991."		

Send your questions to
Peter and Marja
c/o Calvinist Contact.
Confidentiality is assured.

Weekly puzzle by Herman Surasky

ACROSS	1 — beam	6 Drs.' org.	9 Name in boxing	12 Castro's friend?	13 Stratford-on—	14 Czech river	15 Lawmaker's spot	17 Strange: pref.	18 Walked	19 Physiologist — Euler	20 Former Afr. kingdom	21 GOP	24 Zip	28 Verdi aria	29 Oriental	30 Inclination	31 A-one	35 House members	38 — off (angry)	39 Samovars	40 Obviate	41 Certain residence	43 Warns	44 Oval office conference?	48 Lodgings	49 Over there	50 "—, Brute"	54 Caen's river	55 Distinctive attributes	58 Fr. holy women: abbr.	59 Tunes	60 Flat-bottomed boats	61 Patriotic org.	62 Filibuster?	63 Bishop's hat	10 Russ. leader	11 Actor Jeremy	13 All wet	14 Government branch	16 Always	20 Nibbled at	21 M. Lacoste	22 Unruly tots	23 Mona —	24 Dray	25 It's clear to me	26 Kind of dream	27 Depression	30 Cap	32 Above	33 Chipper	34 Concordes	36 Stage extra	37 Sermon	42 Nav. off.	43 Eng. composer	44 Angry	45 Blood carrier	46 Boo-boo	47 Excuse me!	50 Case for small articles	51 Gradation of a color	52 Fr. head	53 Country monogram	55 Wages	56 Inlet	57 Speed letters
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Last week's puzzle

PREP	HAVOC	TBAR
RALE	ADANO	JAGO
ELSE	POSEN	CLEO
SPIRAL	TRICKLED	
SHEARED	SCALE	
GASUP	ALERTS	
TIME	SPIEL	DIRE
ASA	ELL	NIP
PLIE	DRAFT	OAST
SENDER	FIELD	
SIREN	NEEDED	
RATTRAPS	SABINE	
ALAI	DINAH	AMAN
MAYO	ERATO	LETT
ASSN	DEPOT	LYES

News

Ukrainian-Canadians plan centennial celebration

CANADIAN SCENE — In 1891, Wasył Eleniak and Ivan Pylypin arrived in Canada to investigate the offer of free land. They stayed and became the pioneers of Ukrainian immigration to Canada.

Beginning this summer, Ukrainian-Canadians are celebrating their first hundred

years in Canada with what they officially describe as a commemoration and honouring of their past, a salute to their present and a vision of their future.

The first Ukrainian settlement was established in Edna-Star, Alberta, a year after the first pioneers had

arrived. Today, millions of Canadians trace their roots, families or communities to these pioneers.

Among the events planned, beginning on Canada Day, July 1, in Halifax is a re-enactment of the landing of the first settlers. The official opening of the year-long celebration

will be held in Edmonton on August 29.

Celebrations to be held in various cities include art exhibitions, some of them featuring the work of one of Canada's most distinguished painters, William Kurelek; a travelling exhibit, *100 Years of Ukrainian life in Canada*,

which will be seen in Vancouver, Edmonton, Winnipeg and Toronto; a major television dramatization of Ukrainians in Canada and a memorial located in Ottawa to honour all immigrants to Canada — a gift to the nation from Ukrainian-Canadians.

1991 environmental youth corps will employ 3,000 Ontario youth

CANADIAN SCENE — The Ontario government is looking for 3,000 young people who are eager to go to work protecting the environment.

The \$11 million

Environmental Youth Corps (EYC) program, entering its fourth year of operation, will provide work experience for Ontario residents between 15 and 24 years of age (29 if disabled), in the areas of environmental protection, research, and public education.

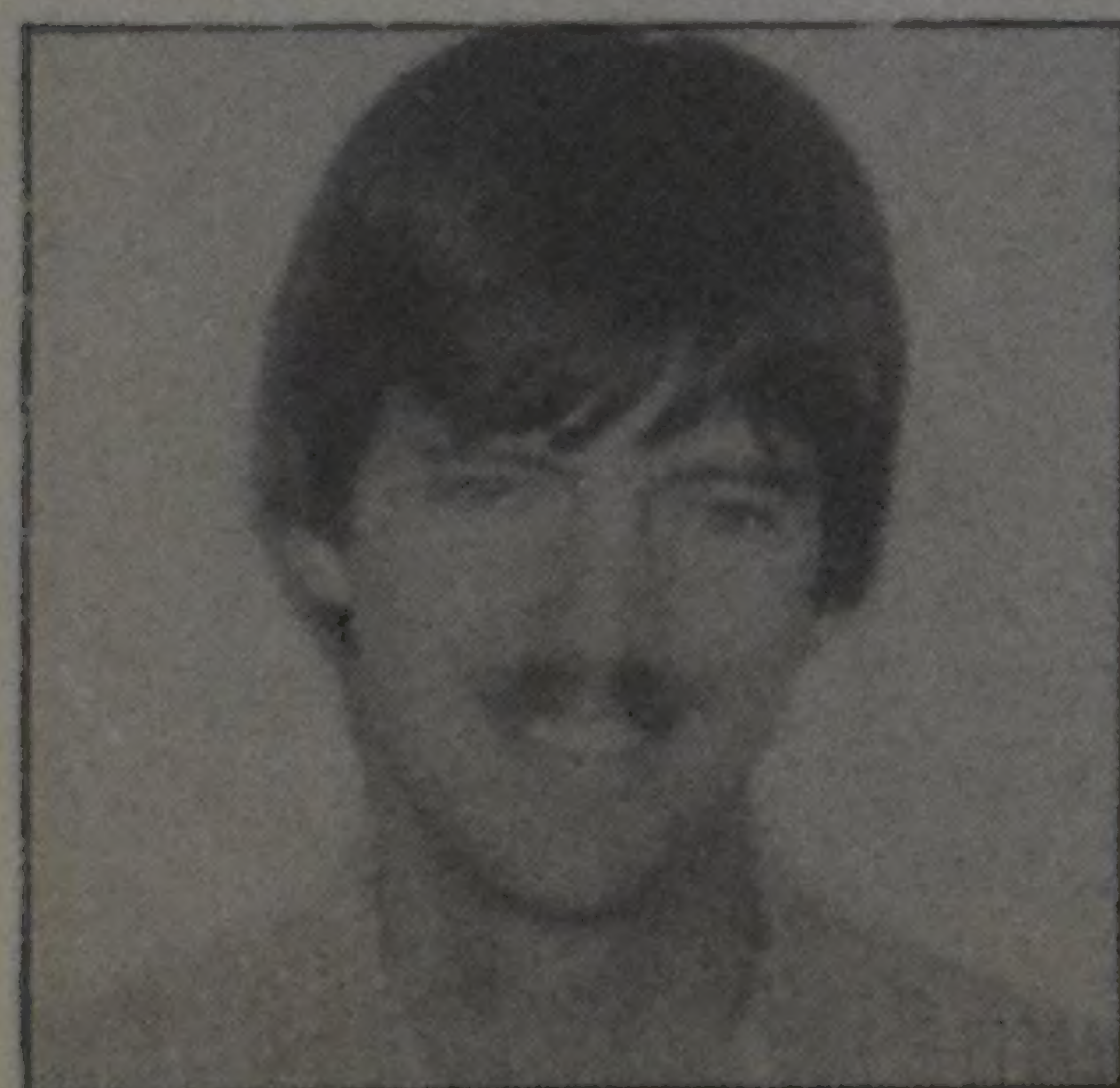
EYC positions offer skills training in diverse areas. Projects range from research studies within universities, to running public education programs on waste management, to conducting inventories of environmentally

sensitive areas, to resource management programs in the agricultural industry, to producing environmentally focused radio shows or publications.

The majority of the projects provide summer employment although some year-round positions are also available.

Interested youth may locate EYC information materials at local high schools, colleges, universities, libraries, Canada Employment Centres and the offices of Members of the Provincial

Parliament, or by calling the Youth Hotline at 1-800-387-0777.



Holy suspicion

Syd Hielema

"There was a question as to whether we should, as a government, respond to what is a very clear cynicism about politicians in this country. We have taken the decision that we should not succumb to that cynicism." (Joe Clark describing the work of the constitutional committee to the House of Commons, May 14)

In Galatians 5 the Apostle Paul contrasts a series of acts of the sinful nature with the fruits of the Spirit. The fruits of the Spirit listed there provide a wonderful set of guidelines for Christian living, qualities for both evaluating one's own life and the many issues one is forced to deal with everyday.

Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control together form a nine-sided "fence" within which there is a great deal of freedom for following Jesus. This fenced-in area provides a profound contrast to impurity, idolatry and the other acts of the sinful nature.

I wonder if Paul might add an item to his list of the acts of the sinful nature today: cynicism. Currently in Canada cynicism is like a contagious disease of epidemic proportions, warping people's perceptions of public affairs and contributing to the breakdown of fragile situations that are badly in need of upbuilding and healing. Just mention the name "Mulroney" almost anywhere and faces will contort, hands will gesture menacingly and mutterings unfit for C.C. to print will roll around the room. Cynicism seems to grow like a cancer, feeding on itself until it grows

out of control.

Media disease?

In many ways cynicism is a news-media disease. Many politicians seem to think that effective use of the news media requires embarrassing their opponents, and the media itself encourages this perception by merrily trying to embarrass everyone in public office. Cynicism allows one to hide within a strong, protective layer wrapped around oneself while demolishing the enemy. It's no wonder that it is so contagious and has locked itself within the Canadian mindset.

If cynicism is a work of our sinful nature, there must be something designed to heal it within those nine-sided fruits of the Spirit. What might be a fruit of the Spirit that can guide one in responding to the news media? Whatever it is, it cannot respond to cynicism with a blind, trusting faith in the news media. Anyone with an awareness of sin and the drive of human self-interest tends to be very cautious about accepting the media's interpretations and analyses of major issues and events.

'Holy suspicion'

Might not this caution be present in something we could

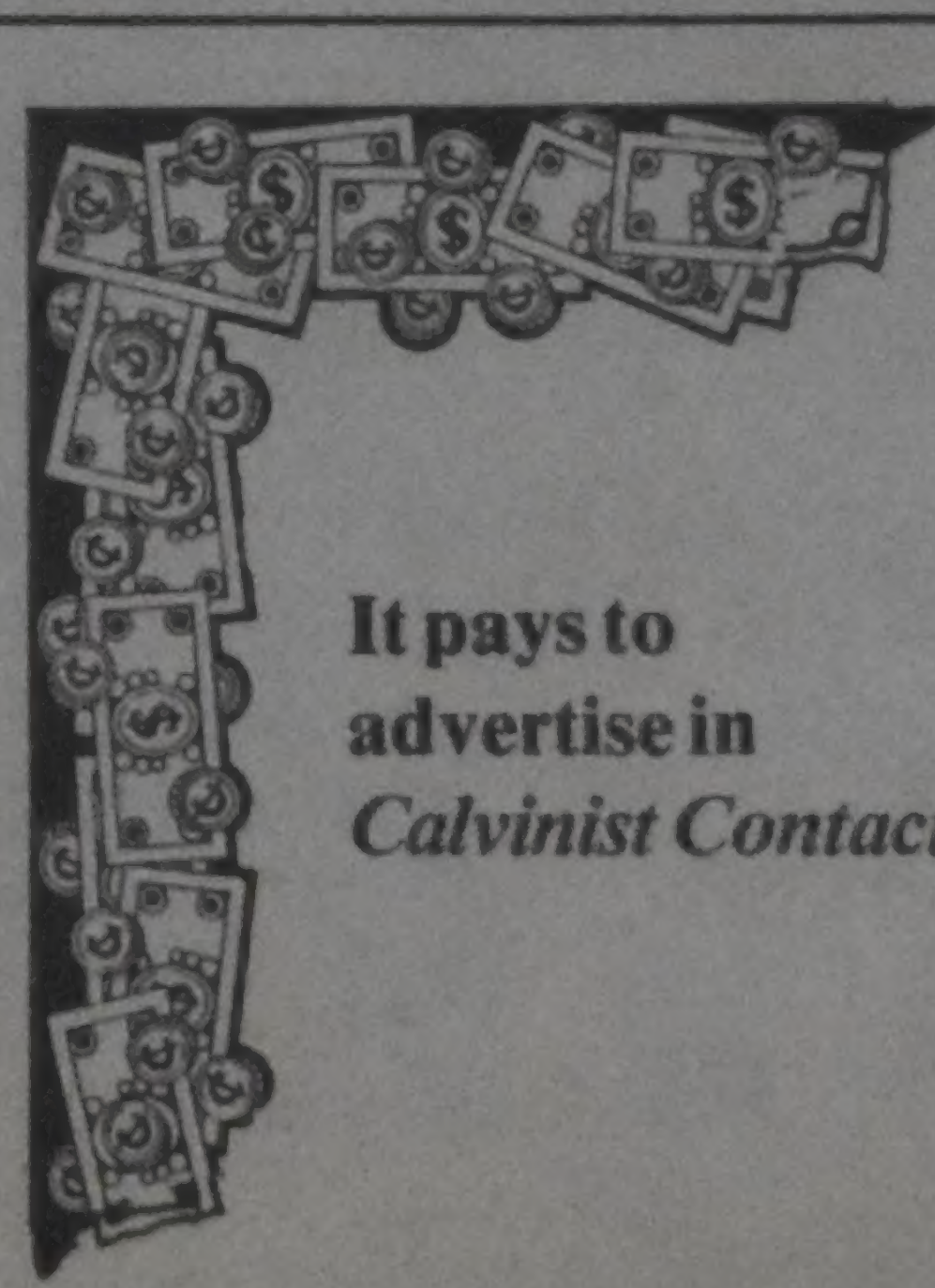
call "holy suspicion"? This suspicion is wary of human selfishness, of news media people abusing power to further their own ends. But this suspicion does not allow itself to degenerate into cynicism. It also recognizes what is pure, honourable and noble, and is free to acknowledge that one who appears deviously manipulative with one issue may be honourable and just with another.

Holy suspicion is not afraid to speak out against power abuse but also refuses to tolerate cheap cynicism. Its gentleness, patience and self-control help it to build both

critical integrity and clear-sighted, fair-minded evaluations of the news media. Holy suspicion affirms that certain positions in our society are worthy of respect even if the position-holder is questionable.

Frankly, I'm not sure if "holy suspicion" is the best term to describe such an approach to the news media. What is clear is that cynicism is an evil, paralyzing disease which is crying for a healing taste of the fruits of the Spirit.

Syd Hielema studies at the Toronto School of Theology.



Church news

Christian Reformed Church

Call extended

— to First, Chatham, Ont., Rev. Peter W. DeHaan of Woodstock, Ont.

Address change

Community Christian Reformed Church, 45 Crosby Avenue, Richmond Hill, ON L4C 2R3; (416) 884-3005. Effective June 15, 1991.

Ministerial resignation

Classis Hamilton acquiesced to the resignation of Rev. Jerome Julien (Calvary, Flamborough, Ont.) from the ministry of the Word and sacraments in the Christian Reformed Church. Classis dismissed him from the ministry at its May 15 meeting. Rev. Julien had already taken up contact with a worshipping group outside the CRC.

Rev. Fred Heslinga, Reporter for Classis Hamilton

40th ANNIVERSARY

Celebration/Reunion
WALLACEBURG
Chr. Reformed Church
July 12, 13 & 14

Fri. - Dinner
Sat. - Brunch and Picnic
Sun. - Celebration service
with Rev. C. Tuyt

**All friends
and former members
are invited!**

Dinner tickets/info., call:
(519) 677-4479

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(Mr. in de Rechten, Leiden)

Leonard de Vries, LL.B.

Also Dutch Law

Calvin College

Calvin College remains open for freshmen and transfer admission to the Fall 1991 semester. Financial aid and housing is also available. Students wishing to apply should call the Admissions Office at 1-800-688-0122 (Canada)

Reflecting and Affecting God's Kingdom

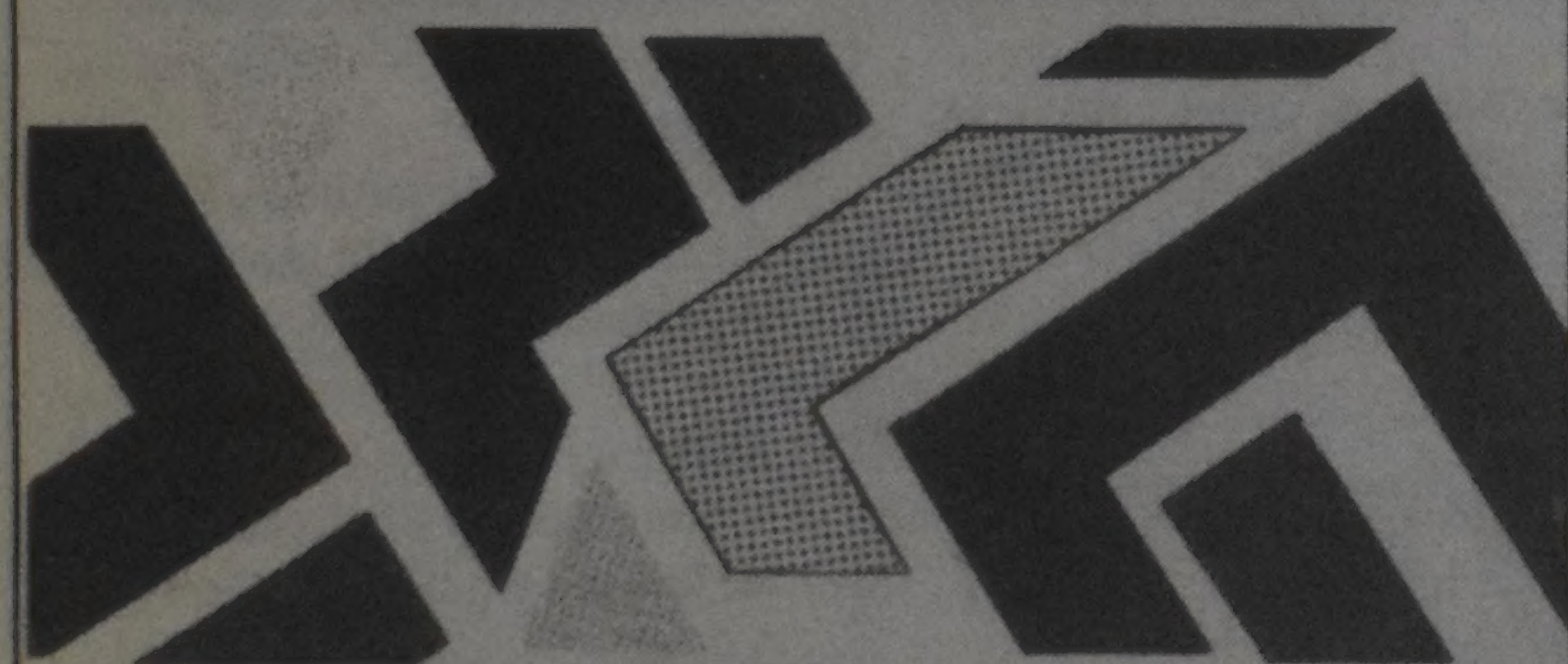


Books

Robert VanderVennen, book review editor

Reformational books from South Africa

KULTUURVERSKEIDENHEID IN AFRIKA verleentheid of geleentheid?



CULTURAL DIVERSITY IN AFRICA embarrassment or opportunity?

Rather than carrying the review of one or more books in this review section, as book review editor I wish to call attention to a number of fine Christian books coming from the Institute for Reformational Studies in South Africa. I have three of their recent books at hand.

The Institute is part of Potchefstroom University for Christian Higher Education. Its director is Dr. B. J. van der Walt, who is cross-appointed as professor of philosophy at the university.

The Institute is similar in some ways to the Institute for Christian Studies in Toronto, though it does not offer courses nor degrees. It has an active program of conferences, and it publishes many books and papers. Some of those arise from the conferences, and some are written by Professor van der Walt.

A new book is called *Cultural Diversity in Africa: Embarrassment or Opportunity?* This is a collection of papers, four in Afrikaans and 16 in English, given at a recent conference on that theme organized by the Institute. It drew speakers from many parts

of Africa, and half of those who attended were black and half white. The conference included a cultural festival which featured songs and music from many nations.

Cultural bridges

The theme puts a finger straight on the sore spot in Africa. What about racial and tribal diversity? In many countries, including South Africa, this diversity is killing nations. What difference does it make that Christians talk about the subject?

In his preface van der Walt writes, "Whoever arranges a conference with this main theme will get to know exactly where the thorny patches are. There are a great many examples throughout Africa how issues centring on cultural diversity should not be handled, but the challenge facing this conference was exactly how it should be used positively."

Van der Walt can come through if anyone can, I suspect, because he has considerable experience building bridges with people of other cultures, especially black people. He says, "Culture binds people together and makes them feel at home." This is good, he adds, provided that people don't look down on the cultures of others.

After three chapters on cultural diversity in South Africa, we have perspectives from Zimbabwe, Swaziland and South Africa. Then Dr. N. Onwe of Nigeria talked of

"The encounter between Christianity and Islam in Africa" and Prof. M. L. Daneel of South Africa spoke on "The encounter between Christianity and traditional African culture: accommodation or transformation?"

Three Nigerian speakers deal with "Culture, social values and development in South Africa." Van der Walt provides a chapter on "A provisional comparison between traditional African culture and Western culture." Africans often live in two cultures, which can give them identity problems.

Four biblical devotionals are included, one of which is on "Unity and diversity in the new creation." The desire is strongly expressed to understand and always act in the light of God's Word.

This book can be purchased by sending a money order for 25.00 rand (the South African currency) to Institute for Reformational Studies, Potchefstroom University for Christian Higher Education, Potchefstroom 2520, Republic of South Africa.

Ministry to university students

Another book I have from IRS is quite different. It is a Christian worldview book written by Australian pastor-educator Stuart Fowler. Its title is *A Christian Voice among Students and Scholars*. Fowler gives perspectives on ourselves and our world, the place of theology, philosophy and faith in today's world, and on the Christian as a student in the modern university. His writing is clear and it contains echoes of the viewpoint of the Institute for Christian Studies. He calls people to be servants of God, active in the world while we are presenting ourselves to God as living offerings. This book also costs 25 rand.

Another 1991 book from IRS is a collection of 42 biblical devotions by B. J. van der Walt under the title *More Precious than Gold. Discovering the Real Wealth of Scripture*. They cover a wide range of Bible writings and human situations. Many of these were prepared for preaching and teaching on mission stations.

Most of us don't have much contact with South Africa except what we see and hear from the news. It is good to know that there is a solid group of Calvinist Christians there, many of whom are trying to be a faithful witness to our Lord especially in the difficult circumstances of their country.



Friends of God

Wayne Brouwer

When God lets us down (III)

"Why, O Lord, do you reject me and hide your face from me? ... the darkness is my closest friend" (Psalm 88:14, 18).

The first question we have to ask when life turns us around is this: "How large is my world?" We need to ask that question because we live in an age that has taught us the value of the individual: I'm important! I count! I've got my rights!

It's a good thing, isn't it? It's a good thing to be living in an age where people are important, where companies talk about customer service, where even our computers are "user friendly." It's good to live in an age where children are protected, and slavery is gone. It's wonderful to live in a society where almost no disease is incurable, where death itself has been pushed back into the far distance.

It's good to live in a period of history where people talk about the dignity of the human person.

Addicted to self

But there's a danger that goes along with all of that, isn't there? There's a danger that we begin to live in rooms where the walls are all made of mirrors — mirrors on the ceiling, mirrors on the floor. Every mirror tipped in my direction. Every mirror telling me that I'm the only important thing in the room.

A society that stresses the value of the individual runs the risk of setting our egos at the centre of the universe. George Eliot talked of that in her great novel *Middlemarch*. She described those metal mirrors of an earlier generation that were polished round and round and round. Over the year, all of that polishing produced tiny scratches in the surface of the mirror. And then, she said, when you put a candle in front of the mirror, the light of that tiny flame was reflected in thousands of circles round and round and round, with the flame at the centre.

Sometimes that happens in our society too, doesn't it? My life is at the centre. My needs are the greatest needs. My concerns must first be met. Society owes it to me! Life owes it to me! God owes it to me!

I remember a minister who once spoke at a large convention in a very great city. The convention hall was located at the heart of a slum area. Christians gathered from all over that region, and hid their cars behind fenced enclosures, and scurried along under the streetlights to get inside the safety of the building. And then they sang about heaven at the top of their voices: "O that will be glory for me, glory for me, glory for me!"

And a woman came to the pastor, complaining how God had let her down, how he had abandoned her, how Christ didn't answer her prayers. "I felt sick!" he said. Yes! Every heart knows suffering! Every life is touched by grief! Every family bears secret burdens!

But people, he thought, how big is your world? God let you down? Heaven will be glory for you? What about those who live on these streets? What about those who don't even have the resources to wonder if God let them down? How big is your world?

Another focus

Maybe your hurts are unbearable today. Maybe the pain is raw and sharp. Maybe the agony of your soul shuts down your world, till all you can see is the throbbing of your heavy heart. Maybe you say the words of Psalm 88 with great and vindictive delight.

But remember the prayer of one in the Garden, one who also agonized in unbearable pain. Remember that he prayed for himself, not once, not twice, but three times: "Father! Take this bitter cup away from me!"

And remember that the father said "No!"

Did the father let him down? Did the father betray him?

No. For this one thing they both knew: The world was larger than that one solitary soul who sat in front of the mirrors that played back to him again and again his agony. And because of that larger world, God delayed the relief he might otherwise have brought.

How large is your world? You need to ask that question, don't you? You need to ask that question before you're swallowed up in self-pity.

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